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BRITISH BAPTIST INVOLVEMENT IN JAMAICA 1783 - 1865

by

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Ph.D. Thesis University of Keele. 1970

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Interest in this particular field of research began when preparing a dissertation for the M.A. degree of Liverpool University, awarded in 1966, entitled The Baptist Missionary Society and Jamaican Emancipation, 1814-1845.

This present study has enabled me to look more closely at Baptist involvement in the history of Jamaica and to extend the period under examination. Whilst I am obviously indebted to the previous study for many insights and opening up to me sources of material, I have in no way been dependent upon it.

G.A.C.

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## Introduction

The events which took place in Jamaica at the end of December 1831 and the ensuing months proved to be the death throes of official slavery in the British Colonies. As a system of colonisation it had persisted too long, and had degraded humanity in the name of the economy. But it cannot be said that freedom came with the Act of Emancipation passed in 1834, an Act hurried along by the events of 1832. Though 'freedom' had official sanction, and technically there were no slaves in the British Colonies after that date, it did not come into full operation until 1838; even then it could not eliminate that attitude towards the Negro which believed that he was de jure the property of the planter, an attitude which persisted for many years - some no doubt would argue that it persisted well into the twentieth century.

Freedom is a delicate and precious possession and, therefore, must be treated with great care; it cannot be ordered into being, neither can it be left to the caprice of homo sapiens, for they soon distort its meaning, as we shall see in the account of events which took place in Jamaica after 1834. In the events leading up to 1831-1832, and the work of establishing the Negroes as citizens of Jamaica after that date, the Baptists played a not unimportant part, which appears generally to have failed to gain recognition. It is the purpose of this present study to attempt, in a small way, to rectify this neglect. It is a study of British Baptist involvement in Jamaica between the years 1783, when two ex-American Negro slaves arrived in the island, and 1865 when the tragedy of Morant Bay occurred, for which the Baptists were made the scapegoats, as in the case of the 1832 insurrection. It is hoped to show how deeply many of the Baptist missionaries were involved in the work of creating a foundation for a Jamaican nation.

As this is primarily a study of denominational involvement, it may appear somewhat biased. There is no intention of suggesting that Baptists alone played a vital role in these events; that would be untrue, nevertheless, it is an attempt to prove that Baptists played a significant role in the development of the island and, therefore, deserve more attention than has hitherto been given to them.

The development of this study would have been impossible were it not for the help and encouragement received from a number of friends. I am grateful to my supervisor, Mr. J. H. Y. Briggs, M. A., for his comments and friendly

advice, also Dr. John Rowe, M.A., of the University of Liverpool, and Dr. Ian Sellers, M.A., B.Litt., of Padgate College of Education, who have also been generous in their help. I must also record my gratitude to the following librarians, who have been most liberal in allowing me the use of material in their keeping: the Rev. N.S. Moon, M.Th., B.A., Librarian and Senior Tutor of the Bristol Baptist College; the Rev. E. W. Moore, M.A., M.Th., Librarian and Tutor at the Northern Baptist College, Manchester. The staff of the Cohen Library, University of Liverpool, who through Inter-Library Loan obtained many volumes for me which otherwise would have involved me in a great deal of travelling. The staff of the West India Reference Library, Kingston, have also been most helpful, during my short visit to Kingston in 1965, and since, supplying me with numerous photo copies of missionary letters.

Finally, my wife and family have had once again to suffer the intrusion into family life of Knibb and his colleagues; I am indeed grateful to them for their forbearance.

## Part 1. Baptist Attitudes to Slavery

### 1. The Awakening Conscience

The Christian Church in England had generally accepted the existence of slavery without question as part of the providential ordering of society until the third quarter of the century, by which time the war of ideas, it has been suggested, had been won, though commitment in practice remained, defended now not on absolute grounds but on grounds of expediency. The agitation of men such as Granville Sharp, however, brought the whole question of the moral rightness of slavery into the open. In 1667 it was considered right and proper for a member of the Broadmead Church, Bristol, to hold and sell slaves for a local historian comments upon the practice:

A curious example of kidnapping human beings for transportation to America is recorded in the minutes of the court of Aldermen in July. The justices note that one Dinah Black had lived for five years as a servant of Dorothy Smith, and had been baptised and wished to live under the teaching of the gospel; yet her mistress had recently caused her to be put aboard a ship to be conveyed to the plantations. Complaint having been made, Black had been rescued, but her mistress (who doubtless sold her) refused to take her back, and it was therefore ordered that she should be free to earn her living until the case was heard at the next Quarter Sessions. The Session Book has perished. From the peculiar manner in which she is described, it may be assumed that Dinah was a negro woman captured on the African coast, and had lived as a slave in Bristol.(1).

Though the church did not deny that 'a blackamoor' could and did shew remarkable christian grace, as in the case of a slave member named Frances, they nevertheless, still looked upon them as property. (2). It was an

1. Latimer J. Annals of Bristol in 17th Century Lond.1900. 344. The Records of a Church of Christ meeting in Broadmead Bristol edit. Underhill E.B. 1847. pp. 136; 397; 447 for references to Dorothy Smith, also Anstey R. Britain and the Congo in the nineteenth century. Lond. 1963
2. Broadmead Records. op.cit. 35-36.

attitude held by many honest citizens, who firmly believed that whilst a Negro could and should become a Christian, he was still somehow different in kind to white people: he deserved kindly treatment, but charity and compassion were not required to overlook the fact that he was a slave. John Pinney, a Bristol businessman, who owned plantations in Nevis and St. Kitts, was typical of a large number of people at this period. Though horrified at what he saw on his arrival on his plantation, he soon became accustomed to the system and grew to regard it as the corner stone of his own fortune:

Since my arrival I've p'rchased 9 Negro Slaves at St. Kitts and can assure you I was shocked at the first appearance of human flesh exposed for sale. But surely God ordained 'em for ye use and benefit of us: otherwise his Divine Will would have been made manifest by some particular sign or token. (1).

It was even possible to produce books of scriptural texts to support the existence of slavery as for example that published by the Roman priest Fr. Harris, Scripture researches on the licitness of the Slave Trade. (2)

As early as 1671, George Fox the Quaker had exhorted slave holders "to deal mildly and gently" with their slaves and "to set them free after certain years of servitude". (3) In 1743 the American Quaker John Woolman, protested at his own country's encouragement of slavery. (4) By the last quarter of the eighteenth century there were definite changes in attitude towards the question of slavery. If profitability was an important feature

1. cited MacInnes C.M. A Gateway of Empire Lond.1938. 210-211. Pares R. A West Indian Fortune Lond. 1950
2. op.cit. London 1788
3. Sherrard O. Freedom from Fear The Slave and his Emancipation Lond. 1959. 99.
4. see Clarkson T. The History of the Rise, Progress and Acceptance of the African Slave Trade etc. Vol. 1. 11. Lond. 1808.



of the eighteenth century, the latter part of the century was marked also by revolution, namely the American War of Independence and the French Revolution, (1) By the 1780's when the Anti-Slavery Campaign was being organised, and had become a political issue, radical ideas were generally challenging the complacency of the Establishment. There was also a new interest in the "uncivilised" peoples of the world, the accounts of explorers such as Captain Cook and others were read widely, and the Negroes brought home by many of the travellers were prized in fashionable society. "Rousseau and his successors had sentimentalised the savage and popularised the gospel of liberty, equality and fraternity" (2). In consequence, slaves became visual aids for the fashionable intellectual concern with the idea of primitive man. This romanticism however, especially with regards to the West Indian Negro, was to change drastically in succeeding years.

In the eighteenth century many Baptists became hyper-Calvinists and Supralapsarian, claiming that God had decreed individual men to either redemption or damnation before the fall of Adam (3). Such a theology, introduced among the Particular Baptists by John Skepp, minister of Currier's Hall Church since 1770 (4), had a paralysing effect upon both preacher and church, effecting a spiritual deadness and contributing to what has been

1. see below. 40-47.

2. Coupland R. The British Anti-Slavery Movement Lond. second edit. 1964. 42-43.

3. Underwood A.C. A History of the English Baptists Lond. 1947. 134.

4. The Baptist Quarterly Vol. XX. No. 3. 1963. Clipsham E.F. 'Andrew Fuller and Fullerism' (1) 106-7. Underwood op.cit. 134 ff.

described as "a period of narrow introspection, theological hair-splitting, irrelevant controversy and heresy hunting." (1)

When in 1781 Andrew Fuller, the first Secretary of the Baptist Missionary Society, wrote The Gospel Worthy of All Acceptance (2) and Robert Hall Smr. published his Help to Zion's Travellers, the "first stirrings of a new life after the winter of hyper-Calvinism", (3) had already been apparent for upwards of a decade amongst the Particular Baptists. The Baptist historian Joseph Ivimey considered that the year 1779, when Hall preached on the text from Isaiah 57:14 "Cast ye up, prepare the way, take up the stumbling block out of the way of my people", was the "commencement of a new era in the history of our denomination," (4) though later scholarship suggests that the 1770 Circular Letter of the Northamptonshire Association indicates an earlier re-orientation of theology (5).

The most important and creative thinker amongst the Baptists at this time was Fuller, born of humble parents on 6th February 1754, in the little village of Wicken in Cambridgeshire. At the age of sixteen he joined the church at Soham, and shortly after his acceptance into membership he experienced something of the restrictions and dangers of hyper-Calvinism. Fuller's pastor, Mr. Eve, a man he held in great affection, ended his ministry at Soham in 1771 over the question of "the power of sinful men to do the will of God, and keep themselves

1. Baptist Quarterly *ibid.* 100-101.

2. published in London 1785, see Fuller's Works vol. 11. Lond. 1831

3. Underwood *op cit.* 160.

4. Ivimey J. A History of the English Baptists. Vol. IV. Lond. 1830. 41. The sermon was subsequently expanded to become Help to Zion's Travellers.

5. Underwood *op cit.* 160.

from sin". (1) In meeting this question Eve distinguished between 'internal and external' powers, suggesting that a man though lacking the 'internal power' to do spiritual good, could, by exercising an 'external power' still resist committing open sin. This was unacceptable to the members who argued that man, still inherently sinful, was unable to refrain from open sin without the grace of Christ. In consequence Eve resigned from the pastorate. On reflection Fuller wrote :

I never look back upon these contentions but with strong feelings. They were to me the wormwood and the gall of my youth: my soul hath them still in remembrance, and is humbled in me. But though, during these unpleasant disputes, there were many hard thoughts and hard words on almost all hands, yet they were ultimately the means of leading my mind into those views of divine truth which have since appeared in the principal part of my writings. They excited me to read and think and pray with more earnestness than I should have done without them; and if I have judged or written to any advantage since, it was the consequence of what I then learned by bitter experience, and in the midst of many tears and temptations. (2)

Since the Soham case arose out of one of the member's lack of sobriety, Fuller here encountered both the practical problem of antinomianism and the theology with which it was surrounded; "antinomianism is not Calvinism" comments G.F. Nuttall, "it is Calvinism's peril". (3) A careful study of Gill and Brine, the two chief exponents of hyper-Calvinism failed to satisfy Fuller for whom theology was no dull academic exercise, but an expression of a personal experience of Christ.

When Fuller himself became the pastor of Soham in May 1775, he had to enter more fully into the controversy of restricted or universal redemption.

1. Ryland J. Memoirs of the life and death of the Rev. Andrew Fuller Lond. 1816, 38
2. *ibid.* 42.
3. The Baptist Quarterly Vol. XXII. No. 8. 1968. Nuttall G.F. Calvinism in Free Church History" 425. see also Vol. XX. Nos. 3;4;5;6; for Mr. Clipsham's careful study of Fuller.

He was greatly distressed by the fact that man was not being warned about the wrath to come, a neglect of which he could not reconcile with his understanding of the Gospel. Helped by Robert Hall Snr. and such friends as John Ryland (later President of the Bristol Academy), who tutored him in Greek and Hebrew, and John Sutcliffe of Olney, another Bristol student - all of them men dissatisfied with the prevailing theology of the Particular Baptists - he began to work out his own theological principles which were later formulated in The Gospel Worthy of All Acceptance. Through his reading of Bunyan, and the works of Jonathan Edwards, and particularly the Diary of that great missionary to the Indians, David Brainerd, he saw it was possible to reconcile the doctrine of personal election and the free offer of the Gospel to all men, finding too, that he could substantiate his findings with his reading of Scripture, the essential touchstone of all his thinking. (1).

In the judgement of Mr. Clipsham, Fuller :

provided the theological basis and justification for the Baptist Mission, and to that extent the B.M.S. can be said to owe its existence to Fuller. On the other hand the effective spread of 'Fullerism' and its consequent usefulness and revivifying influence throughout the country were only possible because there was a Baptist Mission. Carey's heart-searching plea to Fuller in May 1792, leading to the formation of the Mission that autumn, not only forced Fuller to work out the implications of his doctrine, but in a sense forced the whole denomination to a decision. Once that step was taken those churches which supported the Mission were committed to a policy of evangelism at home as well as abroad. There was no going back. (2)

1. The Baptist Quarterly 1963. No. 3. 105.
2. The Baptist Quarterly 1963. No. 6. 270. Ivimey op cit. 64. Stephen Neill suggests that the concern for mission which arose out of the new theological climate was a common feature of the revivals of the eighteenth century. Colonialism and Christian Mission Lond. 1966. 182.

On 2nd June 1784, Fuller preached in Nottingham on 'Walking by Faith', a sermon later expanded into a pamphlet including Some Persuasives to an Extraordinary Union in Prayer for the Revival of Real Religion in which he stated :

Christianity has not yet made its way, even in name, over one-fifth part of the world. Out of 730 millions who are supposed to inhabit our globe, not above 122 millions profess the Christian name. All the rest are heathens, Jews or Mohammedans. And of those who do profess it, the far greater part are either of the apostate Church of Rome, or of the Greek Church, which is nearly as corrupt. Add to this what great numbers of real heathens abound in Christian lands, and unbelievers even in the congregations of the faithful. Surely it is high time to awake out of sleep, and send our united cries to heaven in behalf of our fellow creaturs. (1)

This preceded Carey's famous sermon "Expect great things for God.: attempt great things for God", by eight years. The acceptance of the fact that the Gospel was for all men, suggested to men such as Carey, that missionary work was obligatory, as the title of his famous pamphlet suggests, An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathen.(2) This in turn raised the important issue of slavery.

Implicit within Fullerism as within John Wesley's Arminianism was a new emphasis upon the universal availability of salvation to all men and upon that freedom within which each particular man was required to exercise his capacity for independent moral choice and action. Whilst, however, there was a tendency for Arminian Methodists to confine this new freedom to the personal and religious spheres as witnessed by Wesley's own political

1. cited in Laws G. Andrew Fuller Lond. 1942. 48.

2. op cit. London 1792.

'Toryism', the Fullerite Baptists were convinced that the new emphasis in theology had implications for public and social activity. For them, the old providential justifications for the stratifications of society could no longer serve, since with freedom of action, human responsibility came to receive a greater emphasis than it had in the older Calvinist thinking where it remained one pole of an argument in constant tension with that other emphasis upon the cruciality of divine action. This is not to say that there was no possibility of combining a vigorous social criticism with the older Calvinism, but that in actual fact the changing theological emphasis led those moved by the arguments and the life of fuller to re-examine not only theology but practical Christianity as <sup>e</sup>well. British Baptists under the influence of 'Fullerism' saw a return to the original emphasis of the Anabaptist Movement of the sixteenth century, upon positive liberty making scope for missionary impulse, and with its emphasis upon a new kind of Christian, who "was not a reformer but a converter". "In the stress upon personal accountability and explicit faith, the whole of the Radical Reformation pushed the Lutheran doctrine of the priesthood of all believers in the direction of a universal lay apostolate." (1) In the 1780's just such a change was occurring once more.

At the time of the debate on the American War of Independence, Caleb Evans, the President of the Bristol Academy, replied to John Wesley's A Calm Address to our American Colonies (1775) in British Constitutional

1. Williams G.H. The Radical Reformation Philadelphia 1962. 844-845.

Liberty, which argued that the colonists were Englishmen before the law, and to tax them without consent was an infringement of personal liberty,(1) indicating the tensions of political outlook amongst those influenced by the Evangelical Revival. Nevertheless, it remains true that the Evangelical Revival injected a new vitality into the spiritual life of England. The concept of a social righteousness became clearer with the renewed emphasis upon the need for the holy life to be a morally changed life, and not simply a religiously orientated life. This was at the heart of Fuller's emphasis upon 'holiness' and 'evangelism'. (2)

This new lease of life was seen in a renewal of conscience with respect to both national and international matters. Over the question of the American Revolution there was, however, a division; in general, old dissent in England, with its own grievances against the Established Church, was predisposed to be sympathetic not only towards its co-religionists, but towards the Colonists in general. (3) As a consequence a variety of combinations of religious and political attitudes emerged. J.C. Ryland, father of Dr. John Ryland, for example, combined old fashioned Calvinism and political radicalism; he was reputed to have said :

Were I General Washington, I would call together all my brother officers. I would bare my arm and bid every man bare his, that a portion of blood might be extracted and mingled in one bowl,

1. Swain S.A. Faithfull Men or Memorial of Bristol Baptist College Lond.1884,172
2. The Baptist Quarterly Vol. XX. 1963. No. 6. 269.
3. Payne, E.A. The Freechurch Tradition in the Life of England Lond. 1965. 89

and swear by Him that sitteth on the Throne and liveth for ever and ever not to sheath the consecrated blade till that freedom of his country be achieved....And if after this anyone should turn coward or traitor, I should feel it a duty, a pleasure, a luxury, to plunge my weapon into that man's heart. (1)

As in Wesley's ameliorist variety of Arminianism issued in a deep anti-slavery concern which contrasted with his hostility of the American revolution, so J.C. Ryland combined support for that movement with an old-fashioned rugged Calvinism which found expression in his antipathy to the evangelisation of the heathen, shown in his mistrust of the young Carey's missionary zeal. (2)

The establishment of the Committee of the Anti-Slavery Society in 1783, gave a new impetus to many Christian denominations, though it was by no means acceptable to all Christians. Not all Anglican Evangelicals, who were generally moderate Calvinists in theology, supported the Clapham sect in their work for abolition, under Wilberforce's leadership. Lord Dartmouth, President of the Board of Trade, and an ardent Evangelical, put forward the 'imperial motive' for the retention of the trade, when in answer to a remonstrance from the agent for Jamaica, he said, "we cannot allow the colonies to check or discourage in any degree a traffic so beneficial to the nation." (3)

Among those who made a considerable contribution to the campaign for the abolition of slavery, and who were directly or indirectly concerned with the

1. Underwood op cit. 143. MacLeod A.H. The Life and Teaching of Robert Hall 1764-1831. Durham M.Litt. 1957. 30.
2. Underwood op cit. 142.
3. Coupland. op cit. 40. Mathieson W.L. British Slavery and its Abolition 1823-1838. Lond. 1926. 15.



Baptist involvement in Jamaica, were a number of men trained at the Bristol Academy: Caleb Evans, John Ryland, Robert Hall, John Rowe, Le Compere, James Coultart, Thomas Burchell and Joshua Tinson, to name but a few.

Elsewhere in the country there were also groups of Baptists of advanced political views. In Norfolk, there were Baptists preaching politically radical sermons: at King's Lynn in 1776, William Richards was an early advocate of the abolition of slavery, while in Norwich in 1778, Rees David Fulminated against the American War. Norwich was also the home of Mark Wilks, an old-fashioned Baptist minister noted for his Jacobin sermons in the 1790's. (1)

The Welsh connection of the Bristol College established through the principalships of Hugh and Caleb Evans, was reinforced when the fiery Morgan John Rhys spent a year at Bristol in 1786. Rhys, then spent four years ministering at Penygarn from 1787, during which he published tracts advocating the abolition of slavery in America and Jamaica. Two of the tracts dealt specifically with the West Indies : The Sufferings of Thousands of Black Men in Jamaica and other places, set forth for the consideration of the kind Welsh in order to try to persuade them to leave Sugar, Treacle and Rum written about 1789; the other was entitled The Complaints of Black men in wretched slavery in the Sugar Isles. His republican sympathies led him to believe that the French Revolution was the result of the French people being tired of the oppression of the monarchy

1. Jewson C. The Baptists in Norfolk Lond. 1957. 55 Thompson E.P. The Making of the English Working Class Lond. 1968. 148-150.

and of Roman Catholic priests, and that they longed for freedom of the Gospel. In this faith he and a number of his friends established a society to give Bibles to Frenchmen, and he himself went to Paris in August 1791, where he rented a room in which to preach the Gospel and distribute Bibles. His publications and activities necessitated his having to flee to America, where his reputation and his republican sympathies were more readily accepted. In 1793 he published A Sermon on the Execution of Moses Paul - an American Indian - with which he argued for the emancipation of the American Indian slave. (1)

Twenty years after the War of Independence, Rhys preached a sermon to the soldiers of the Western Army, at their headquarters in Greenville, in the Northwest Territory, wherein he expressed the feelings of many British Dissenters on the American War of Independence and the French Revolution:

'Illustrious Americans! Noble patriots! You commemorate a glorious day - the birthday of freedom in the New World! Yes Columbia, thou art free. The twentieth year of thy independence commences this day. Thou hast taken the lead in regenerating the world. Look back, look forward; think of thy past, anticipate the future and behold with astonishment the transactions of the present time! The globe revolves on the axis of liberty; the new world has put the old in motion; the light of the truth, running like lightening, flashes convictions in the heart of every civilized nation. Yes, the thunder of American remonstrance has fallen so heavy on the head of the tyrant that other nations, encouraged by her example, will extirpate all despots from the earth. O France, although I do not justify thy excesses, I venerate thy magnanimity. If the sun of thy liberty has been eclipsed by a blood-thirsty Marat and Saturnine Robespierre, if their accomplices, the sons of faction, will darken thy horizon, the energy of the nation, the unparalleled success of thy armies, like a mighty rushing wind will scatter the clouds and drive them from thy hemisphere. The sun of liberty will return restored with

1. Griffiths J.T. Rev. Morgan John Rhys: The Welsh Baptist Hero of Civil and Religious Liberty of the Eighteenth Century. Camarthen 1910. 80-86. also Dictionary of Welsh Biography. 1953. 522.

healing in its wings! Yes, its genial rays will restore the swooping spirit of the distressed, and give new energy to the champions of Freedom.

Invincible Frenchmen, go on! Having laid your hands to the plough, look not back until the soil of Europe is made a proper fallow to receive the seeds of emancipation. (1)

Although worried by the excess of the French Revolution, Dissent persisted in its quest for a democratic way of life, finding a new field of operation in the cause of Negro freedom.

Another of the early Baptist opponents of slavery was Robert Robinson of Cambridge who, though originally a Particular Baptist, gradually became an ardent expositor of liberal theology. Robinson was<sup>a</sup>/founder of the Cambridge Constitutional Society, which adopted in 1790 the basic principles of the Revolutionary Society, declaring that all political authority was derived from the people and that the right of private judgement, freedom of conscience, liberty of the press and of election and trial were sacred and inviolable. (2) It was hardly surprising when, in 1788, his tract Slavery inconsistent with the Spirit of Christianity denounced all forms of slavery as unjust and inhuman. (3) It was from the Cambridge Society, whose members were in sympathy with the Anti-Slavery Movement formed in 1783, that one of the earliest petitions to Parliament was sent - the Quakers having sent one earlier in the same year. (4).

1. *ibid.* 130-131.

2. Hughes G.W. With Freedom Fired Lond. 1955. 48.

3. Works of Robinson. Vol. IV. 60ff.

4. Coupland. *op cit.* 64.

The Cambridge petition came from the pen of Robinson who, said Joseph Ivimey with some exaggeration, gave "a correct view of the principles and feelings of the Baptists on that vile trade". (1) Robinson's petition however expressed the feelings of many influential Baptists :

"To the honourable the Commons of Great Britain in Parliament assembled. The humble petition of the gentry, clergy, freeholders and others of the county of Cambridge, sheweth. That your petitioners, understanding that the slave trade is likely to become a subject of parliamentary investigation, cannot help expressing their most earnest desire of a change in the present system of African trade.

Your petitioners are aware that Britain derives innumerable benefits from her plantations, and that the plantations depend upon the labour of negroes; but they are not convinced that a slave trade is necessary to a supply of labourers. They abhor slavery in every form, and that kind most of all which renders cruelty necessary to the safety of the slaveholders.

Your petitioners humbly represent that a slave trade is neither just, nor safe, nor, in the present case, productive; for it obstructs other branches of traffic which promise far greater national advantages. Nor can your petitioners help observing with sorrow, that a slave trade is a dishonour to humanity, and a disgrace to our national character, utterly inconsistent with sound policy of commercial states, and a perpetual scandal to the profession of Christianity.

Your petitioners, therefore, humbly pray this honourable house to take the premises into consideration, and to grant such relief as they in their great wisdom see fit.

And your petitioners, as in duty bound, shall ever pray. (2)

A study of sermons hostile to the practice of slave holding and trading in slaves reveals a three-fold level of argument. In the first place, there are arguments from Natural Law, which may be clad in Christian language, but which nevertheless have a rational rather than a supernatural source. Secondly, there are revelatory arguments: on a

1. Ivimey. op cit. 49.

2. ibid. 49-50.

general level these are concerned with the implications of creation, Universal Fatherhood, and Universal Salvation, and on a specific level, the exposition of specific texts in interpersonal relationships. Thirdly, there is the argument which emerges in the later discussions which argue that slavery must be opposed because in practice it inhibits missionary activity.

One of the men influenced by Robinson on the question of slavery was James Dore, a student of Caleb Evans, and minister of the Church at Maze Pond London. In 1788 he was requested by his church to preach on the subject of the African Slave Trade, the church minutes indicating too, that after the sermon a collection should be made:-

for the benevolent purpose of the Committee for the effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade.... as an evidence of our most hearty concurrence with them in their truly laudable undertaking. (1)

Dedicating the sermon to "An affectionate people who are zealous friends of the GLORIOUS CAUSE OF UNIVERSAL LIBERTY", Dore took his text from Ezekiel 27:13: "They traded the Persons of Men". After a long exposition of the history of Tyre, he drew from its final destruction spiritual lessons which led on to his main theme that "The very idea of trading the persons of men should kindle detestation in the breasts of Men - especially Britons above all Christians." The argument of this sermon followed virtually the same line as that taken by Robinson, in the Petition to the Commons, and did not in fact differ in substance from the general argument followed by nineteenth century radicals, who were generally theologically

1. Swain op cit. 98.

liberal, if not secularist. It is noticeable that many sermons and Christian tracts on this issue involved a nice blend of humane and Christian arguments, as is well illustrated by Dore's sermon which can be taken as representative of the type: Emphasising respect for human life, Dore argued on the basis of the act of creation that, all men,-the prince, the peasant and the negro slave - are equal. His argument seems to be based on two main factors namely that there was a natural right and also a divine activity stemming from the act of creation and the Fatherhood of God; which he expounded throughout the sermon. All had one Father, which raised for him the question, "are not all men free?" There were, he claimed, "natural rights which belong to men as MEN." Liberty was more than a Natural Right, however, it was a gift from God to every man, therefore "to traffic on the sacred rights of human kind is to invade the prerogatives of heaven." Civil government was only conducive to general happiness when it protected men in the enjoyment of their natural rights; such rights included "the right to their lives, their limbs, their liberty, the fruit of their labour and the use, in common with others, of air, light and water....." He illustrated his theme by reference to some atrocities reported by John Newton, the ex-slaver, who had since been ordained as an Anglican parson and was to make an important contribution to the Abolition Movement. (1)

Britain was a synonym for liberty, "Magna Carta", the Petition of Rights and the Coronation Oath are bulwarks of English liberty." claimed the preacher,

1. Martin B. John Newton Lond. 1950 also Martin B. An Ancient Mariner Lond. 1960.

though in practice dissenters were quite prepared to argue the converse when they took the government to task for their own continued political disabilities. Nevertheless, Dore used this deposition of England's being the land of liberty to argue that "a slave cannot remain a slave in England", a theme which became an axiom of English society through the efforts of Granville Sharp. After extolling the principle behind the French revolution, namely the principle of liberty, he attached the argument that the trade was essential for the well-being of the Royal Navy by suggesting that those who were engaged to man the slave ships were more often than not treated worse than the slaves. Consequently the Navy lost as many men as it gained - an argument which on the evidence, was a sound one.

His final argument was that he was addressing a Christian congregation, and in no way as Christian could his audience justify the Slave Trade. Quoting from Robinson of Cambridge, he suggested that the Biblical command and the example of Christ, left them no choice but to condemn the whole business; the only positive way in which British Christianity could show its horror of the trade was by supporting the newly formed Society which existed to eliminate it. (1)

As agitation increased against the Slave Trade, so did support for the Abolition Society. Abraham Booth, minister of the Prescot Street Chapel, London, prompted a petition to express the horror he and his congregation felt concerning "that infernal traffic"; his church gave generously to the

1. Dore J. A Sermon on the African Slave Trade Lond. 1788.

funds of the Society to help defray the costs of petitioning Parliament; in 1791 Booth published a sermon entitled Commerce in the Human Species, and the enslaving of innocent persons, inimical to the laws of Moses, and the Gospel of Christ based on Exodus XXI:16; "He that stealeth a man and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death." (1) In a correspondence with Dr. Rodgers of Philadelphia, in 1795, Booth attacked the existence of slavery in a land of which Rodgers boasted "the United States knows no subjects. We are all citizens, and inhabit the greatest country on earth." (2)

Not all Baptists were as keen as Booth. In a letter to William Carey, Andrew Fuller even has occasion to speak of his disappointment when in 1804 the attempt of the Jamaican Assembly to destroy the Dissenting Churches in the island failed to move a number of the brethren in London sufficiently to take effective action:

The Legislators of Jamaica who are mostly infidels and profligates have made a law which stops the mouth of every black and dissenting preacher and prohibits the poor people from meeting together to worship God! The Methodists made application to the Privy Council on behalf of their people; but our London brethren could be bro't to do nothing, nor make application to Government in any way. Seeing therefore that nothing could be done Hall & Sutcliffe and myself determined to exert ourselves. An Address to the Privy Council was drawn up, respectfully remonstrating against the law in question. Bro. Sutcliffe was very active in London about it, but did not sign it. Only Hall, myself and Booth signed it. (3).

In the North there was strong feeling against the trade. Thomas Langdon, minister in Leeds, spoke in scathing terms of those who called

1. Ivimey op cit. 369. Rippon J. The Baptist Annual Register 1791-1793 Lond. 60, 282
2. Baptist Magazine 1839. 527-529.
3. Letter of Fuller to Carey, B.M.S. Archives.



themselves Christian yet supported the Trade, (1) while the Yorkshire, and Lancashire Association was perhaps the most outspoken and forthright in their denouncement of those who, calling themselves Christian, being so forgetful of :

the principles of their religion as to stand forth the defenders and patrons of the most horrid and diabolical practice that ever disgraced the conduct of mankind. We need not tell you that we mean the SLAVE TRADE. Good God! Must a practice so abhorrent to all the principles of humanity and justice still be supported by the laws of a Christian Country? It is still possible, in this enlightened age, to find a large majority in a British House of Commons who can disgrace themselves and their country by voting against the abolition of this inhuman traffic, and pleading for its continuance.... Let us hope, however, that the period is not far distant, when the SLAVE TRADE shall no longer dishonour the British name. Blessed be God, there are those in this Kingdom, and many noble souls, both in and out of Parliament, who feel for the miseries of the poor degraded Negroes, and have generously pledged themselves never to desert their cause..... (2)

Here we see a good example of the combination of the human and the Christian argument; with the 'principles of humanity' in an 'enlightened age' finding expression in 'the laws of a Christian Country', there is no basis for the continuance of such a trade.

Meanwhile, in the West Country, with Bristol College as a focal point, anti-Trade feeling was strong. In Bristol itself, Caleb Evans and Joseph Hughes, both of the College, were active supporters of the Bristol Auxiliary of the Society (3) and in 1788 the Western Association of Baptist Churches, under the chairmanship of the former, met at Portsmouth Common, to form a resolution of its :

1. Underwood op cit. 176.

2. Rippon op cit. 272-273.

3. Martin P. Anti-Slavery Movement in Bristol Bristol Historical Association 1968

deepest abhorrence of the Slave Trade, and to recommend it earnestly to the Ministers and Members of all our Churches to unite in promoting to the utmost of their powers, every scheme that is or may proposed, to procure the ABOLITION of a traffic so unjust, inhuman and disgraceful and the continuance of which tends to counteract and destroy the operation of the benevolent principle and spirit of our common Christianity. (1)

Between 1787-1790 Ivimey, who was to serve on the Agency Committee of the Society, recorded that the Western Association gave three subscriptions of five guineas, (2) while in 1791 the Northern and Midland Associations also declared their support and their "hearty abhorrence of the wicked and detestable merchandize" (3) suggesting a common mind on the issue amongst the Associations.

Robert Hall (1764-1831) was, perhaps, the most effective of the Baptist thinkers on the question of slavery. Imbiding J.C. Ryland's passion for liberty, whilst studying at Ryland's school in Nottingham, and later influenced by his friendship at the University of Aberdeen with James Mackintosh, the penal reformer, he became one of the most outspoken of Baptists on all social questions.

During his early days in Bristol, in 1788, Hall had been an ardent supporter of the Bristol Auxiliary of the Anti-Slavery Society, along with Evans and Hughes, though he seemed to be more intent on establishing a theological basis for his growing social interest and abolitionist views, as his letter to his father Robert Hall Snr. indicates:

1. Dore op cit. 38.
2. Ivimey op cit. 63.
3. Ivimey op cit. 63.

We have a great deal of talk here about the slave trade; as I understand from your letter you have had too. A petition has been sent from hence to Parliament for the abolishing of it; and a committee is formed to co-operate with that in London, and any measure that may be taken to promote their purpose. At Bristol much opposition is made by the merchants and their dependents, who are many, perhaps most of them, engaged in it. Our petition was signed by eight hundred upwards; which considering that no application has been made to any, we think a great number. Many things have been written in the papers on both sides; some pieces I have written myself under the signature Britannicus, which I purpose to get printed in a few pamphlets, and shall send one of them to you. The injustice and inhumanity of the trade are glaring, and upon this ground I mainly proceed; upon the policy of abolishing it I tread lightly, because I am dubious about it; nor can it be of great consequence to the question in hand; for if it can be proved cruel and unjust, it is impious to defend it..... I am afraid the abolition will not take speedily, if at all. The trading mercantile interest will make great outcry; the scheme will be thought chimerical, and after producing a few warm speeches will, I fear, die away. (1)

The principle of freedom he believed to be right, in fact to be enjoyed by everyman, it being "founded on the constitution of human nature" (2), again reflecting the widespread employment of the 'natural law' argument.

Hall began his ministry in Cambridge after studying at Bristol and Aberdeen at a time when the country was seething with discontent which he attributed to the need for political, judicial and ecclesiastical reforms. When he moved to Leicester in 1807 he became keenly interested in the depressed working class and involved himself in social questions other than the slavery question. In his address to the Leicester Auxiliary for the Society in 1824, Hall claimed that it was the prerogative of a "reasonable being" to determine his own actions, as long as they did not injure others. Slavery, he maintained, degraded beings from the denomination of persons

1. Gregory O. A Brief Memoir of the Life of Robert Hall M.A. Lond. 1833. 38-39.
2. Hall's Works. Vol. III. 93.

to that of things; by merging the interests of a slave in those of the master, it caused a man to become a mere appendage to the existence of another, instead of preserving that dignity which belonged to him as a reasonable and accountable person." (1) He proceeded to argue the case for immediate abolition on the grounds that slavery considered as a perpetual state, is incapable of vindication, and since trade in slaves was clearly an integral part of the same system, and was open to the same kind of moral stricture, he argued they had to stand or fall together. (2) He clinched his argument by striking a very realistic and materialistic note, that the British taxpayer was paying "more than two millions annually for no other purpose than to maintain the slave system of the West Indies. (3)

Besides those members of the Particular Baptists who had been influenced greatly by "Fullerism" and the Evangelical Revival, the New Connexion of the General Baptists, namely those General Baptists who reorganised themselves as an Evangelical association in response to the eighteenth century Awakening, also supported the new Society. Thomas Clarkson in his The History of the Rise, Progress and Acceptance of the Abolition of the African Slave-Trade by the British Parliament (1808) (4), recalled that a deputation from the New Connexion of the General Baptists comprised of Stephen Lowdell and Daniel Taylor was the second group to respond to the circular letter sent out by the Committee on 22nd June 1787. The Old Connexion which was

1. *ibid.* Vol. IV. 221.

2. *ibid.* 230.

3. *ibid.* 232.

4. *ibid.* 230.

increasingly inclined to Unitarianism, also supported the movement; their General Assembly, meeting in 1787 passed the following resolutions:

- 1) Resolved that the slave trade is inconsistent with every natural human principle.
- 2) That we approve of the motion, intended to be made to Parliament for the abolition of such a trade.
- 3) Resolved that brothers Lowdell, Dendy, Treacher and Taylor be appointed to wait on the Committee etc. to let them know our approbation and readiness to assist in defraying the expenses of such application. (1)

From the start of its publication in 1809 the Baptist Magazine reported the activities of the abolitionists and discussed the difficulties of maintaining Christian work in Jamaica. (2) Here then is a third strand in the argument - not only the human argument of natural law and the argument from creation and the Fatherhood of God with its amplification with reference to particular portions of Scripture, but now the argument of mission - that the fact of slavery inhibited missionary advance. After 1814, when John Rowe, the first British Baptist missionary, arrived in Jamaica, (3) the steady flow of missionary letters telling of life on the plantations for the Negro, naturally increased interest in the issue, but there was little if any biting comment in Rowe's letters upon the need for political action to release the slave, until 1823. In an anonymous letter of that year published in the Baptist Magazine a full-blooded attack was made on the slave system and the writer argued that complete abolition was the only human and Christian

1. Minutes of the General Baptist Assembly Meeting Vol. 1731-1811. 134.
2. see below 48-75.
3. see below 76-83.

attitude. (1) That same year the Baptist essayist John Foster - yet another Bristol student - delivered an address in which he reiterated the importance of the Christian doctrine of man and its effect on the slavery controversy:

I appeal to the God of justice and vengeance against my detention in this thralldom! in a situation from which the poorest and most forlorn of our people would revolt with abhorrence... a situation.. in short, which goes as near as possible to make it of no value, no privilege, to be MAN.... In surveying and judging this system of holding men in slavery, we are to remember that we stand on the Christian ground....We have nothing to do with the practices sanctioned among ancient nations, even the most refined and illustrious...We acknowledge no authority, either in any theories of philosophy, or legislation, or political economy, which may assume an independence of Christianity, or a paramount validity. It is plainly an affair of morality, under the jurisdiction of a religion of charity and mercy. So regarding it, we need not hesitate to assert unconditionally, THAT IT IS WRONG, ESSENTIALLY SO, FOR MEN TO ARROGATE A PROPERTY IN FELLOW-MEN; THAT THERE CAN BE NO SUCH PROPERTY. (2)

With the entry "of the English-speaking world on a large scale into the missionary enterprise" (3) and the abolition of the slave-trade in 1807, new and important questions were raised: how were the new theological insights with their implications of human equality to be applied to the slave-based societies in which they found themselves? These questions are the main theme of this study; developments affecting the Baptist missionaries in Jamaica reveal some of the answers which were reached and given by the missionaries involved.

The chief concern of the Baptist Missionary Society in London was the conversion of the Negro slave, though in the formulation of this policy

1. Baptist Magazine 1823. 278-283.
2. Foster J. Lectures by the late John Foster. Lond. 1844. 307-310.
3. Neill S. A History of Christian Missions. Lond. 1964. 261.

they managed to avoid the full implications of their evangelistic enterprise, even though some of their agents on the spot did not. It is however possible that those who drafted the first letter of introduction to John Rowe, their first agent to Jamaica, were not unaware of the implications of missionary activity in a slave society, but foresaw the difficulties of pursuing those implications. In consequence, Rowe's letter of instruction was not as dogmatic in its stricture as were the subsequent letters of instruction.

The official attitude of the missionary societies naturally made the work of the missionary either easier or more difficult, depending on the temperament of the missionary: easier in that there was a prescribed limit beyond which the missionary could not go, for difficult in that it prevented him exercising his conscientious scruples against the structure of the colonial society in which he found himself. Thus, on the one hand, without too much strain on his conscience, he could refrain from making decisions involving political activity, but on the other hand, such restrictions made life extremely difficult for the person who felt keenly the injustice of the institution of slavery and who was inclined to action on this basic issue; not all were prepared to allow the missionary society in London to define on their behalf what was God's and what was Caesar's.

The evidence concerning the B.M.S. during this period seems to suggest that after the first missionary had been sent to Jamaica, the official attitude of the parent body made the work difficult, as is evidenced by the case of Le Compere (1). The letter of instruction issued to John Rowe was

1. see below 84-86.

discussions avoid as beneath your office. (1)

In 1824 the letter of instruction to Knibb was equally adamant that he was to take no action whatsoever which might cause him political involvement. In this particular instruction it is of interest to note that the Biblical arguments are similar to those used by the pro-slavery party :

You are quite aware that the state of society in Jamaica is very different from that under which it is our privilege to live in this country, and that the great majority of its inhabitants are dependent upon their superiors in a degree altogether unknown here. The evidence of the fact will probably, especially at first, be painful and trying to your feelings; but you must bear in mind that, as a resident in Jamaica, you may have nothing whatever to do with its civil or political affairs; and with these you must never interfere... you cannot justly incur the displeasure of those among whom you may be placed....Most of the servants addressed by the apostle Paul in his epistles were slaves, and he exhorted them to be obedient to their masters, in singleness of heart, fearing God; and this not only to the good and gentle, but also the forward. (2)

This attitude was not peculiar to the Baptists, for the Wesleyan Society also reminded the missionaries that:

your sole business is to promote the moral and religious improvement of the slave to which you have access, without in the least degree in public or private, interfering with their civil condition. (3)

It will be seen that, in spite of the restrictions by the B.M.S. to its agents, the judgement of Dr. Ryall is well founded when she writes:

In the narrow sense of direct participation in running the state, the record of the Jamaican missionaries is indeed meagre, as nearly all the societies issued strict prohibitions against political involvement. The restrictions were respected (slavishly, so, in the case of the Wesleyans) except in the case of the Baptists acknowledging no overriding

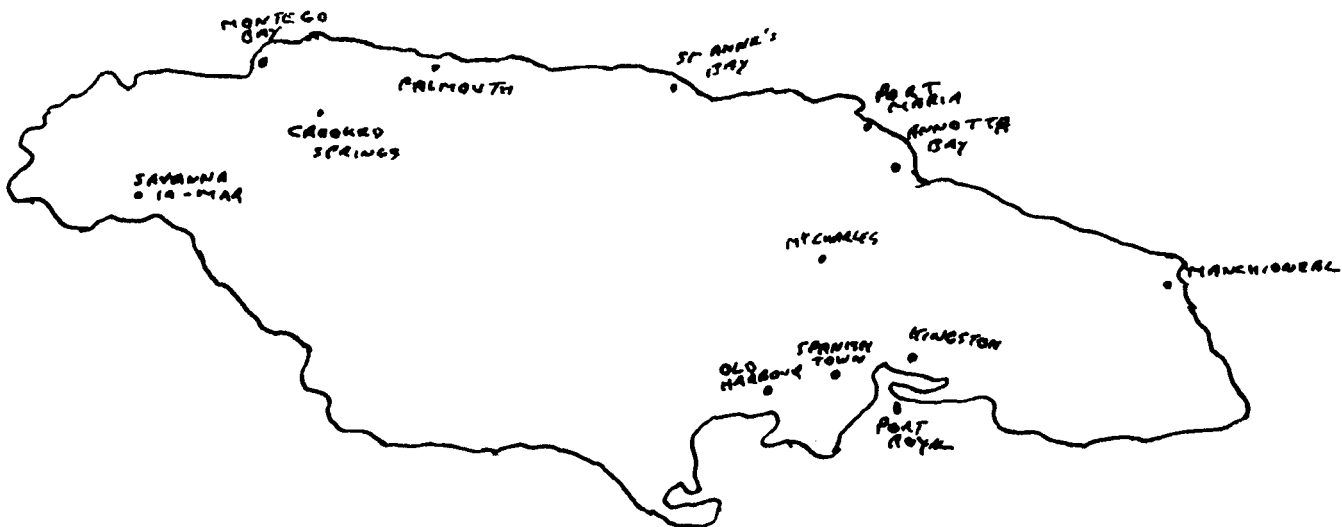
1. cited Richard M. Missionary Activities in Jamaica before Emancipation Lond. Ph.D. 1964. 14. also Parliamentary Papers Commons Vol. 20 Report from Select Committee on Extinction of Slavery. 411
2. Hinton J.H. Memoirs of William Knibb. Lond. 1847. 149-150
3. Richard op cit. 13.



prohibition against participation in politics... the Baptists refused to compromise with the planter interests. (1)

These critical years found the B.M.S. struggling with its official conscience on the question of slavery, the more radical criticism of society which were being canvassed amongst its home constituency living in tension with a pietistic concern which put the priority of evangelism in the personal sense before all things else. Meanwhile its missionaries discovered that the only way in which they could effectively do their work was to embrace a total commitment to the slave population which similarly attacked the narrow pietistic definition of mission adopted by the committee in London. This involvement, their total belonging to the slave community, brought the denomination into disrepute and even suffering, but out of the suffering there came that unique opportunity to share in the preparation for real freedom. (2)

1. Ryall D. The Organisation of Missionary Societies and the Recruitment in Britain and the role of the Missionary in the Diffusion of British Culture in Jamaica during the period 1834-65. Lond. Ph.D. 1959. 307-310
2. For Baptist involvement in the Colonisation of Sierra Leone, see Rippon op cit. 473-484. also Fyfe C. History of Sierra Leone. Lond. 1962.



JAMAICA - Principal Baptist Centres 1831.

## 2. A Note on British Baptist Attitudes to American Slavery

With the Act of Emancipation of 1833 a technical change was brought about in Jamaica, this change was also evident in the Baptist attitude towards the whole problem of slavery, especially in America. The scent of victory in Jamaica made them bolder and by 1833 they were turning their attention to the attitude of their American brethren and their domestic problem of slavery. Their interest in the American problem was, of course, not new - as early as 1795 Abraham Booth had corresponded on the question with friends in America. (1) By 1815 the reasons for slavery in America were discussed at length in the pages of the Baptist Magazine. Slaves were most numerous in Virginia, the two Carolinas, Georgia, Kentucky and Tennessee. Virginia alone contained about three hundred thousand, almost one third of the population. The Baptists were by no means uniform in their opinions on slavery, many left the subject alone, others remonstrated against it in general terms, whilst others opposed it vehemently. The American Baptist historian Robert G. Torbet reminds us that there were two factors in the American scene which ought not to be overlooked, the first being that the Baptists seemed to have been so absorbed in their own struggle for religious liberty to have occupied themselves greatly with the slavery issue what was for them in its infancy; and secondly they had committed themselves to a policy of non interference in civil affairs which precluded for many any consideration of the problem of slavery. (2)

The majority of the Baptists who were concerned in slavery discussed their reason for having slaves with frankness, and presented four reasons why they felt it right and proper for them to remain slave holders without any feeling of contravening the Gospel; their reasons reveal a mixture of humanitarianism and the profit motive, backed by the usual Biblical arguments, as well as a sense of the predestination of the Negro to be nothing more than a slave; all these put together make what appeared to be a strong rational case:

(1) They had no hand in bringing the Negroes in to the country, but since they are there somebody must take care of them.

(2) They cost the planters a great deal of money, generally from three to five hundred dollars apiece, sometimes more, therefore if they set

1. see above, p.23

2. Torbet, R.G. op.cit. 282

them free, all this money would be sacrificed.

(3) There were those who had inherited their slaves as part of their patrimonial estate: and now they knew no better way than to find them employment and make them as comfortable as their circumstances would permit.

(4) The argument from history, that the Romans and others had slaves and that they were numerous at the time of the Christian church's birth; neither Christ nor the Apostles, nor any of the New Testament said anything against it, if it were contrary to the spirit of the Gospel it is strange that it is nowhere prohibited. (1)

By 1835 a long correspondence between the Baptists in Britain and America over the question of slavery resulted in Dr. Cox, minister of Hackney's Mare Street Chapel and the Rev. James Hoby, minister of Mt. Zion Church Birmingham going as a two man deputation to America. Their visit was a disaster. One notorious meeting which took place in New York was the Anniversary meeting of the American Anti-Slavery Society, at which Cox decided that his presence would be inappropriate. His non-attendance was used adversely by George Thompson who had been active with the English Abolition Society, and when the news percolated home to England there were a number of people willing to believe the worst of Cox and Hoby, and many uncharitable comments were penned, such as those written by Thomas Price in his review of the book published by the two men on their return:

We not only remain unsatisfied of the propriety of the course which they adopted, but strongly impressed with the conviction that they have unintentionally inflicted on the cause of abolition in America an injury, which it will require the utmost vigilance and most strenuous efforts of the Baptist denomination to remedy.....Would that a Paul, a Luther or a Knibb had occupied their place....We are persuaded that they were Abolitionists at heart, but they had not the moral courage and determination of character which fitted them for such new and trying circumstances. (2)

At varying levels of the British Baptist scene the American situation was debated; the Lancashire and Yorkshire Association, a year before they divided into separate Associations in 1837, minuted their concern for circulation through the Association, (3) while resolutions began to pour in from many sections of British Baptist life. The Baptist Magazine for 1836 lists the following Associations which had passed similar resolutions: the

1. Baptist Magazine 1815. 109-111. the article is based on Benedict's History of American Baptists 1848:13
2. Short, K.R.M. 'English Baptists and American Slavery' The Baptist Quarterly Vol. XX No. 6 April 1964. 243-262. Mr. Short has prepared a thorough study of the involvement of British Baptists in the American situation, for publication. Also Putnam, M.G. The Baptists and Slavery 1840-1845 M.Ph. University of Chicago 1910
3. The Lancashire and Cheshire Association Circular Letters 1834-1873 1836 17

Suffolk and Norfolk old association, East Kent, Berks and West London, the Midland and Yorks and Lancaster, the Evangelical General Baptist, the Western, Oxfordshire and Bristol - altogether they represented 343 churches and 34,521 members. (1)

The discussion was, however, not confined to Associations, the Minute Book of the Young Men's Mutual Improvement Society of the Ebenezer Baptist Church Bacup, Lancashire, for the years 1860-1862 reveals that the question was debated with some force by many sections of church life, and though there were those who supported the South in their struggle perceiving, not without some justification, that the struggle between North and South was concerned with matters other than slavery, nevertheless the majority of the young men at Bacup sympathized with the North. (2)

Relations between the American and British churches tended to strain the hitherto cordial relationship, even to the extent of some arguing that all communion with slave-holding churches should cease. (3) There was, however, one ironic note sounded when it was thought there was a possibility of war between the two countries over the question of frontier disputes along the North American border. (4) The Lancashire and Cheshire Association published in their circular letters for 1846 an address, supported also by the churches of the West Riding of Yorkshire, to the effect that the bond of brotherhood which existed between them may produce a 'reciprocal influence' for good. (5)

On January 1st, 1863, the Proclamation of Emancipation formally came into effect, though it freed slaves only where federal troops were not in control; in other words, it failed to free slaves where slaves could actually be freed; only when the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution was passed on December 18th, 1865, following the Civil War, was slavery tangibly outside of the law. (6) The news of American Emancipation was received with jubilation and a most generous offer came from the Lancashire and Cheshire Association, its generosity is realized when one bears in mind the fact that the American Civil War was bound to damage the cotton industry in Lancashire

1. The Lancashire and Cheshire Ass. Circular Letters, op.cit. 406-407
2. Ebenezer Baptist Church, Bacup, Lancashire: Minute Book of the Young Men's Mutual Improvement Society 1860-1862 Also Rawson Papers Rylands Library Manchester for evidence of divided loyalties in England.
3. Short. op.cit. Quarterly
4. Woodward op.cit. 304-307
5. Lancs & Chesh. Circ. Letters op.cit. 1846:25
6. Filler, L. The Crusade against Slavery 1830-1860 New York 1960 279-280

and Cheshire, for one of the chief imports necessary for these areas was American cotton and the Civil War led to one of the only industrial setbacks during the years 1851-1873, causing the 'cotton famine' of 1861-1863. (1) A fund had been brought into being in 1862 to aid the people of the Cotton area during the 'cotton famine', a report tells that the contributions to this relief fund came from as far afield as the West Indies, India and Burma. (2) The total receipts had totalled £6,917. 8s. 5½d. and a total payment of £6,820. 12s. 4d. left a balance in the bank of £96. 16s. 1½d. which the Association Committee made up to £100 and sent to the Freeman's Aid Society of the United States.

Over the years the British Baptists, while continuing to comment on the American scene, soon realised that by comparison with the West Indian situation they could make little or no impact upon the American situation; they therefore concentrated on the area in which they could do most good and where, through the Missionary Society, they had a traditional involvement for other than abolitionist purposes.

1. Woodward. op.cit. 313-314
2. Lancashire and Cheshire Minute Book 1865 306

Section A. Baptist Beginnings in Jamaica

1. Effect of the American War of Independence and the French Revolution

The relationship between the American colonies and Britain was changed by the events of 1775-1781 when the colonies broke free from British rule. As a result of this change trade took a new course, for many years British exports had concentrated on the American market, independence meant a shift in the character of British exporting for, as Dr. Eric Williams suggests, American Independence exploded the widely-held fallacy that Britain could only conduct her trade successfully by means of a system of monopolies. (1) India and Africa took on a new importance as areas of commerce, though contrary to all expectations American trade increased: during the first quarter of the nineteenth century the United States was the largest single customer of Great Britain outside the British Empire. (2)

With these new centres of interest there came also a difference in emphasis in the idea of the British Empire, "the change from trade to government and the idea of trusteeship"<sup>(3)</sup>, which, according to Dr. Williams, was hardly ever realised save in a few individuals such as Thomas Burchell, William Knibb and James Phillippo. (4) This change in emphasis did not diminish Britain's preoccupation with her policy of Trade monopolies, thus Admiral Rodney's victory over the French fleet in the Caribbean in 1782 enabled the British to have a much stronger hand in negotiating with the French, resulting in the return of Dominica, St. Vincent, Grenada and St. Kitts at the Treaty of Versailles 1783; islands which had previously been captured by the French, and Jamaica, wealthiest of the British West Indian Islands was safeguarded. (5)

The position of slavery was also effected by the events of 1775-1781. With thirteen colonies lost to the Empire, the number of slaves within the confines of the British Empire was reduced considerably, consequently the

1. Williams Capitalism and Slavery op.cit. 124
2. ibid. 123-124. Curtin, P. The Image of Africa Wisconsin 1964 88f.  
Robinson, R. Gallagher, J. African and the Victorians Lond. 1961 chaps. 1&2  
Woodward, op.cit. 7-8
3. Plumb, J.H. England in the Eighteenth Century Lond. 1963. 132
4. Williams, E. British Historians and the West Indies Lond. 1966. 221
5. Plumb op.cit. 131 Augier, Gordon, Hall, Reckord op.cit. 109  
Parry, Sherlock op.cit. 138-139

work for Abolition of the Trade was made that much easier; the British anti-Slavery Movement could now work in a climate more favourable to its aims.

In the wake of the American victory, there were reactions and reprisals which were to have important effects upon the small island of Jamaica. The first and obvious result was the stopping of certain basic commodities from America upon which Jamaica had been so dependent, this resulted in a rising spiral in prices as Dr. Ragatz indicated: (1)

<u>Article</u>	<u>Cost before the War</u>	<u>Cost in 1875</u>
Rice per cwt.	13s. 9d. - £1	£2.2s. 6d. - £3.10s.0d
Indian flour per cwt.	2s. 6d. - 6s. 3d.	7s. 6d.
Common flour per cwt.	15s. 6d. - £1	£1 - £2. 10s. 0d.
Superfine flour per cwt.	£1 - £1. 7s. 6d.	£1.7s. 6d. - £3
Common Boards per m.	£6 - £10	£10 - £30

As long as the American colonies remained part of the British Empire they could trade direct with the colonies, but now things were different. Though Jamaica had more sympathy with America than with Britain at this particular time, they hoped that the immediate results of the war would not disrupt the previous arrangements. Their petition to London for permission to continue trade with America was rejected. The British Government argued that "the United States was now a foreign power, outside the system of Imperial Preferential trade". (2) The extent of this prohibition is seen in the Act of Parliament which became effective from 4th April 1788, and which was a stringent application of the Navigational Laws established in 1651 (3) to ensure a British trade monopoly by prohibiting the import of colonial produce save in British vessels, and restricting the import of foreign goods into Britain, save in British ships or ships belonging to the country of the commodities' origin. The 1788 Act states:

That no goods or commodities whatever be imported or brought from any of the territories belonging to the United States of America into any of his Majesty's West India islands under penalty of the forfeiture thereof, and also of the ship or vessel in which the same shall be imported or brought, together with all her guns, furniture, ammunition, tackle and apparel; except tobacco, pitch, bar, turpentine, hemp, flax, masts, yards, bowsprits, staves, leading boards, timber,

1. Ragatz, J.L. The Fall of the Planter Class in the British Caribbean 1763-1833 Lond. 1928 187
2. Parry, J.H. Sherlock, P.M. A Short History of the West Indies Lond. 1965 139-141
3. Navigational Laws finally repealed in 1849. see Woodward op.cit. 72.



shingles and lumber of any sort; horset, neet cattle, hogs, poultry and live stock of any sort; bread, biscuits, flour, peas, beans, potatoes, wheat, rice, oats, barley and grain of any sort, such commodities respectively, being the growth or production of any of the territories of the said United States of America.

And that none of the goods or commodities therein before excepted, enumerated and described, shall be imported or brought into any of the siad islands from the territories of the said United States.... except by British subjects and in British built ships, owned by his Majesty's subjects, and navigating according to law. (1)

Even in 1827 the effects of such restrictions were being felt as is evidenced by a letter from Thomas Burchell who wrote that "necessary repairs of the premises will require nearly the whole sum raised in England....especially since all communication is prohibited between the Colonies and the United States, from which we were formerly supplied with lumber...." (2) These restrictions not only raised the cost of living in the West Indies to a degree hitherto unknown, save in the expensive days at the turn of the seventeenth century, but it also increased the activities of the smugglers. (3)

A second and important repercussion of the American victory was the steady flow of Negroes from the United States into the West Indies, Jamaica in particular receiving a very large number. Already the proportion of Negro slaves to white inhabitants in the island was alarming: by 1775 the figure was estimated at 200,000 slaves to 12,737 white people (4) It was feared, with good reason, that an influx of slaves might increase the danger of revolt in the island. American independence resulted in an inevitable exodus of those who held Loyalist views, amongst whom were not a few ex-slaves. Ostensibly the Negro moved from one slave society into another; with one difference, as far as the ex-slaves were concerned they were now free and there were those amongst them who had experienced some measure of responsibility and authority. This is important in understanding the events which led to the 1832 insurrection in Jamaica, and eventually to the emancipation of all slaves within the British Empire. It is also important in understanding the reasons for the involvement of British Baptists in the

1. Augier, F.R. Gordon, S.C. Sources of West Indian History Lond. 1962. 58  
Parry and Sherlock op.cit. 57
2. Baptist Magazine 1828. 41
3. Patterson, O. The Sociology of Slavery Lond. 1967. 21-22
4. Black, C.V. The Story of Jamaica Lond. 1965. 105.

life and development of the island of Jamaica towards nationhood. It might even be argued that in a somewhat circuitous manner these emigrants from the Southern States played a vital role in the procession of events leading up to the tragic split of the country of their departure into two, less than a century later. Their presence in Jamaica helped to aggravate the problem of slavery in America; British Baptists also took a very active part, writing and sending a deputation to the American Baptists though, as Louis Filler points out, the American scene did not respond to "a British type of compromise" on the problem. (1) One other factor emerged as a result of the American War and that was its effect upon the British merchants and planters. Trade dislocations caused the affected groups to meet in London and Bristol and the setting up of a standing committee in 1782 to represent their common interests. A secretary and a treasurer were appointed and Lord Penrhyn was its first chairman. This was the origin of the West India Committee, one of the most influential of 'pressure groups', and the vehicle of West Indian interest in Britain. (2)

Following hard on the American War of Independence, Europe was disturbed once again - France and Britain had only ended a protracted struggle in 1763 - this time by the social revolution taking place in France. By the end of the eighteenth century the question concerning the nature and place of man in society had reached such proportions that its implications were being felt throughout the world. Nowhere was the attempt at an answer more indelibly written than in France, where blood was being shed instead of ink. The repercussions of the cataclysmic events taking place in France were being felt even in the small West Indian island of St. Dominigue, which was one of the first of the French Colonies to realise the significance of what was happening in Paris.

Of the three main groups who made up the population of the island: the white colonists, the free Mulattoes and a large Negro slave population, it was the free Mulatto group who first took advantage of the revolution. Revolt broke out in 1790 under the leadership of a young wealthy Mulatto named Oge, whose education in Paris had taught him to demand equality and

1. Filler op.cit. 48-52

2. Carrington, C.E. The Overseas: Part One Making of the Empire Lond. 1968 260  
see above p.24

to fight for what he believed to be the right of every man. Though Oge and his followers were soon defeated it was but the prelude of a great slaughter which continued until every sign of French domination had been wiped out, and there emerged a Negro republic of Haiti, under the leadership of Toussaint L'Ouverture in 1803 after a struggle lasting twelve years. (1)

The events in St. Domingue caused fear in the island of Jamaica, more so because of the emergence of Negro leadership in the revolution, which caused the Jamaican Plantocracy to fear that their Negro population might follow the example of the slaves of St. Domingue, a fear reported by Maria Nugent, wife of the Governor, who entered in her Journal that "It is said that much mischief is brewing in the country, and that it is connected with the St. Domingue French..." and the next day wrote "...think all night of the late discoveries, and fear this wretched country is devoted to the destruction that has overtaken St. Domingue". (2)

The excesses of the French Revolution may have turned the people of Britian to prayer (3) but they also slowed down some of the social work, for fear that it would appear too radical. Wilberforce may have been more successful in his bid for abolition in 1791 had it not been for the events taking place in France. To many English spectators the bloody revolution was but the inevitable outcome of allowing radical thinkers to have freedom of expression, therefore it produced an intensive fear of mob violence which was something new in English history. (4) An interesting letter written to Wilberforce by Samuel Hoare, treasurer of the Committee for the Abolition of the Slave Trade, indicating something of that fear as well as the suspicion that dissenters were pro-revolutionary: there is also revealed another area of suspicion that any association with Dissent would lead to a loss of influential Church support, a fear expressed in most interdenominational activities undertaken during this period, such as the work of the London Missionary Society, the British and Foreign Bible Society as well as the British and Foreign Schools Society. The letter dated February 1792 takes into account the revolution taking place in St. Domingue:

I was fully aware that the insurrection of St. Domingue would create some alarm amongst our friends, and I am pleased to learn that every

1. Black op.cit. 116-121. For a study of Toussaint L'Ouverture see James, C.L.R. The Black Jacobins op.cit.
2. Wright, P. edit Lady Nugent's Journal Kingston 1966 163-165. Augier, Gordon, Hall, Reckord The Making of the West Indies Lond. 1965 114-116
3. Orr, J.E. The Light of the Nations Lond. 1965 19
4. Woodward op.cit. 19-20

prudent measure will be adopted to obviate its effects; but I find another circumstance has rendered some of our best friends rather lukewarm and especially those who I am most earnest to bring forward - I mean members of the Church of England. They have adopted an idea which I hope has no foundation, that Dissenters wish for a revolution; and that the abolition of the Slave Trade is somewhat connected with it. What had added to this apprehension is some inquiries of Mr. Clarkson's whether there are many friends of the French Revolution, in letters which he addresses to different places.

If I knew where he was, I would write to him on the subject; a moment's reflection must convince him that there is too much reason to fear that what may be only meant as his own private sentiments will be construed into an opinion of our committee. I hope thou wilt lose no time in giving him a hint upon this subject, or our cause will be essentially injured. (1)

It was a known fact that many of the leading Baptists such as Robert Hall and Robert Robinson were sympathetic towards the Revolution in France, and the activities of such men as Morgan John Rhys (2) undoubtedly created the impression that Dissenters, Baptists in particular, were liable to engender the climate for a revolution.

Whereas the American War of Independence had direct effects upon Britain and Jamaica, the French Revolution heightened the fear and the expectation of revolt in both countries, and helped to create what W.L. Burn has called a "revolutionary mystique". (3)

Meantime, Britain, fearful of the events taking place across the English channel, was herself involved in trying to find an answer to the question concerning the nature and place of man in society. Tom Paine, the radical pamphleteer had, in 1791, published The Rights of Man, in which he attacked the British establishment and expounded a theory of egalitarianism. In spite of the grave fears caused by the French Revolution, Paine's idea gained popularity, indicating that there was in Britain a considerable radical sympathy, as well as a deep desire to answer this important question. The ordinary man was beginning to realise that the question was not primarily about economics but essentially about himself and his status as a human being; the emergence of at least four classes by the beginning of the nineteenth century, namely, the landed gentry, the commercial indust-

1. Wilberforce, R. I & S. edit. Correspondence of Wilberforce Vol.1 Lond. 1840, 89

2. see above, p<sup>1</sup>12 &13

3. Burn, W.L. The Age of Equipoise Lond. 1968 edit. 66

rialist, the artisan - which was the labouring aristocracy - and the very poor, gave the question added import.

Until this particular time, England had not been fully aware of the extent to which radicalism could go but now was left in no doubt at all as to the possible price demanded for liberalisation; London had felt the searing blast of insurrection in 1780 when the Gordon riots broke out in reaction to Parliament's attempt at Catholic relief, as well as expressing deep discontent amongst the lower levels of the social structure.

Britain had just cause to fear. Not only was she suffering from the effects of a long protracted war with France, which had ended in 1763, but she had had inflicted upon her the ignominy of defeat from her own colonies. Claiming that they were victims of British tyranny, the American colonies had fought for and won their independence. Britain was suffering from violent reaction both within and without her Empire. It would seem that the great Empire was being dispersed with cries of liberty; while at home men were asking awkward questions about their own rights and privileges as human beings.

Tom Paine had, in 1776, expressed these questions in his Common Sense, and it has been suggested that "it was Thomas Paine's Common Sense which shifted the emphasis of the American Revolution from the conducts of Civil war to the question of independence". (1) The idea of an egalitarian society, however, though slowly gaining ground in certain quarters, was in the main still thought of only in terms of the white man. While Paine's basic ideas of democracy formed the concepts of Government in America, the majority, like those in Britain, were not prepared to accept the obvious implications of an egalitarian doctrine: even Jefferson was defeated in his bold effort to include a clause condemning slavery in the Declaration of Independence, and with this went the last sop to Common Sense. (2)

In England just after the publication of The Rights of Man, there appeared another small volume which was to have as important an effect as The Rights of Man. It was William Carey's An Enquiry into the obligation of Christians to use means for the conversion of the heathen: published in

1. Nye, R.B. Morpurgo, J.E. The Birth of the U.S.A. Lond. 1965. 216
2. *ibid.* 214

1792. Dr. E. A. Payne, in his introduction to the 1962 facsimile edition, writes that it "may rightly be regarded as a landmark in Christian history". (1) Carey in his Enquiry spoke of the obligations and responsibilities of caring for all men, especially those who, because of their economic and social environment, were virtually slaves. Carey's inspiration came from the New Testament, a very different source from that from which Paine drew his inspiration. Yet this humble Dissenting minister, who had learnt much of his theology, as well as his geography, working over a cobbler's last, also perceived that the revolutionary movement now in full spate could not be stopped - "Yea, a glorious door is opened, and is likely to be opened wider and wider, by the spread of civil and religious liberty..."(2)

The effect of a revolutionary spirit let loose cannot be contained within a small compass; by its very nature it must expand. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries civilisation was being rocked by the spirit of a revolutionary age, and the effects were world wide.

1. op.cit. Lond. 1792. facsimile 1962
2. ibid. 79

## 2. The Arrival of the Negro Baptists in Jamaica

The beautiful island of Jamaica is full of contrasts, both in colour, climate and sound, as well as the deeper contrasts of class and caste, which serve to emphasize the tremendous contrasts to be found in the history of the island which has known prosperity and poverty, progress and disaster, slavery and freedom.

The history of Jamaica is one of intense struggle. From its earliest days the island has known slavery in some form. The Arawak Indians who were probably the first inhabitants of the island knew a great deal about fear. The Caribbean islands were not always the tourists' delight, for the tribe who gave their name to this part of the world, the Caribs, were anything but hospitable: rather, they were a fierce cannibal tribe who made frequent sorties on all the islands in the lesser Antilles, and from there they ventured out attacking all who came within their path. From time to time Jamaica came within striking distance, and then it was that the Arawak Indians were taught the meaning of fear.

The brutality of the Caribs bid fair to exterminating the peaceful Arawak people, but this doubtful honour must go to the Spaniards who occupied the island soon after Columbus had discovered it in 1492. Many of the Indians were literally worked to death in search of gold believed to be buried in the island; others died through cruelty inflicted by their masters, while underfeeding and European diseases also helped to bring about the total extermination of this gentle tribe. (1)

The replenishment of the island with a new people took a considerable time and the new heterogeneous group which emerged was an amalgam of people from Europe and Africa, so that our present study concerns a people whose history is set geographically in the Americas, but a people who belong in part to Europe and in part to Africa. (2)

It was in the seventeenth century that the English invaded the West Indies with intent to occupy. The Lord Protector, Oliver Cromwell, in 1653 drew up his great 'Western Design' by which means he hoped to capture

1. Black, op.cit. ch. 1 for much information on the Arawak Indians.
2. Parry and Sherlock op.cit. 1-13. Sherlock, P. West Indies Lond. 1966, 10  
Catherall G.A. The Baptist Missionary Society and Jamaican Emancipation  
1814-1845 Liverpool M.A. 1966, 5-10.

several of the islands and thus achieve complete supremacy of the seaways in the Caribbean. The whole plan was ill-prepared and the army was certainly ill-equipped for such a venture; it was doomed to failure from the beginning. In sheer deperation, and in order to appease the wrath of Cromwell, General Venables led an attack on Jamaica which was at that time a relatively easy prize. Cromwell, therefore, had to be content with Jamaica, and set about the task of forming it into a profitable colony, (1) though he did not live to see this take place.

Apart from the influx of people into the island, the one import that was to change the course of the island's history was the sugar cane, whose original home was the South Pacific. (2) Columbus is said to have brought the sugar to Hispaniola and from there to have introduced it to Jamaica, with the consequence that thereafter the cultivation of sugar replaced the search for silver and gold, but in the process it brought not only wealth but also slavery. The cultivation of the sugar cane created an insatiable demand for manpower, thus the Slave Trade became as important an economic factor as the sugar itself, especially to those European countries who were engaged in the Trade. It was not long before the new masters of Jamaica realised the importance of sugar. Sir Thomas Modyford, one of the first Governors, in 1664 set about organizing the whole industry, making it as efficient as possible even though it meant bringing more people into the island: "Emigrants from Barbadoes formed a substantial proportion of the settlers, sugar was the main crop and estates were large almost from the very beginning, some over 5,000 acres and very few under 150". (3)

The growth of the plantations demanded the increase of slave workers; hence it soon emerged that the two things that mattered in Jamaica were the plantations and the slaves, which together spelt out a 'quick' way to wealth. From the early days of plantations up until the early part of the nineteenth century there were, however, two forms of slavery operating on the estates. There were the Negro slaves, those who had been bought from the slavers in the markets, and those who had most probably been part of a general transaction between one estate and another. Then there were

1. Parry and Sherlock, op.cit. 58-60
2. Black, op.cit. 89f
3. Parry and Sherlock, op.cit. 69



many white people who had come to Jamaica seeking their fortune from sugar. The majority of these men ended up as part of the system, and were in all but name slaves. Their only consolation was that if they were still alive at the end of their contract they were free men. (1) These indentured servants were recruited from many walks of life, some seeking riches, others escape from the law. Those who anticipated wealth were, more often than not, disappointed, and the feckless usually became even more dissolute. Not all the plantations were places of deliberate cruelty, but the very system evoked the worst in people rather than the best.

Some of the Jamaican legends give a glimpse of what life was like on a plantation where cruelty was deliberate. The story of Annee Palmer of Rose Hall, one of Jamaica's classic tales of mystery and cruelty, is based on the life of the real Annee Palmer, the mistress of Rose Hall, whose story had been handed on down the years and has lost nothing in its telling. The story teller spotlights the fact that the raison d'être of every estate was to make money:

To her critics Annee excused the harshness of Rose Hall life on the ground that only with the aid of the cart-whip could the property make the forced crops one after another which were necessary if the heavy annuity, paid each year from out of the profits, could be met. (2)

There were plantations whose owners cared what happened to their slaves, as is the case of M. G. Lewis, but, as R.R. Madden wrote in 1835, "M. G. Lewis' name is not in favour amongst the colonists" (3) nevertheless, there is much contemporary material to underline the fact that life on a sugar estate was cruel and hard. Unless one was an estate owner or at least his attorney, one could not expect much from life other than a mere existence; the Negro slaves could expect even less. The Annee Palmer saga, dates from the 1820s when she first came to Rose Hall; the acts of cruelty, though criticised, were not out of the ordinary, as the following extract from a letter written in 1810 by a young Yorkshire lad to his father indicates. William Fisher from Birks, near Huddersfield, having left home under some stress, underwent experiences on an estate such that he almost lost his mind through despair. Within the letter we are given some insight as to life on

1. See Pope-Hennessy, J. Sins of the Fathers Lond. 1967. Manix, D., Cowley, M. Black Cargo Lond. 1963. Patterson, op.cit. 9:74 for descriptions of the Trade and its organisation.
2. Black, C.V. Tales of Old Jamaica Lond. 1967. 9,20
3. Lewis, M.G. Journal of a West India Proprietor 1815-1817 Lond. 1929  
Madden, R.R. A Twelvemonths Residence in the West Indies Vol. II Lond. 1835, 32

an estate and the conditions under which both white and Negro slaves had to live and work, as well as some indication of attitudes towards religion and slavery. The letter, with its quaint spelling, was written from Halifax St. Mary's and is dated July 10th 1810:-

When I arrived here and saw what my business was I felt sick, and my heart was broken so low that it can never be raised, I was in a fever, & some kind of drunken fellow came in and bled me, bathed me in warm water & then forced me to take about 60 grains of jallup & 12 grains of Calamine, however I am recovered so much that I can just crawl about with a stick to support myself, you would scarce know me if you met me, my blood is reduced to water almost & I'm a mere sceleton more than I was when at Buxton notwithstanding that I am called upon to discharge my duty as a Book keeper, which is very different to what I was informed by Mr. Hogson, instead of being a Gentleman's life it is more like a slave, they have to turn out at day peep, 5 o'clock in the morning & see that the Negroes have the full number of mules, Steers, Goats, pigs, fowls & are all in health ...& let the poor slaves take out a salt herring or two each & a little rum for their support, they walk about in the fields all day tho' it rains fit to drown them up to the calf of the leg in wet and dirt, and 8 o'clock we have a little cold coffee & herring, or a little salt beef or port, with now & then a little fowl or fresh beef of a very mean kind, the same at supper, as much rum all day as you please to take, but very seldom any wine or other spirit, no malt liquor, no bread or pudding, only a kind of root call'd yams, cocos & planting, my appetite for such food is so bade that I eat next to nothing, when I am faint I'm obliged to drink rum to keep myself alive....What hurts me most is there is nothing but wickedness & drunkenness going forward & especially on Sundays no religion or going to church, there is a new church 20 miles from here they call it very nigh, but the parson is in jail & it is never owned except by a few negroes....There is only about 3 white men to 150 blacks and mungrel, the white that are in this line are chiefly Scotch & Irish of bad character who had no trade or wished for an idle profligate life & a great many of them deserters from jail & ships of war....In crop time which is from 6 to 9 months a year, we have to stop from 12 o'clock at night to 8 o'clock the next evening in the distillery & boiling house one week & the next week the other Book keeper stops from 4 in the morning until 12 at night, so we are kept upon duty 20 hours in 24 . We have also to ride up & down the country on business all weathers.....having to be out of door all times of day and night a Planter has seldom a dry rag to his back especially such a fellow as myself who has not got any to change.

Another thing I was ignorant of, every white man upon the island must be a solder, we have all got arms & a grand suit of red cloth given to us & having frequestly to go to muster at places 20 miles distant, I understand this is the principal part of our service to frighten them, the governor compells every owner of sugar, or any other estate to find a white man for every fifty negroes he owns to be a solder, otherwise he must pay 50£ per annum to the parish, I was sick when I first came and saw negroes flogged every day, they are divided into gangs & every gang has two drivers, head driver & 2nd driver, or Boson,

large black fellows, who stand over them all day with a large whip in their hands & if they loose a moment or give the least offence the driver calls four negroes & seize the offender, lays he, or she, naked upon the ground & flogs their backsides till they are chattered, & for a great offence they tie them to a ladder upon the ground, they scream fit to terrify a man.....if I don't order them flogging they will be master of me & insult me then it is my duty to take a gun & shoot them, a man's life is never safe in this country & I hope no young man will be foolish enough to come here without knowing what it is....but I'll die before I'll be a planter, tho' it is best for getting money, a person that is hard enough to manage the business may get to be an overseer & have 3 or 400£ a year but no one has wages equal to their hazards, 19 out of 20 die without getting anything & I fear I shall be one of the unhappy number....(1)

From this extract it can be seen that the social and economic conditions were not designed to give a young man a high view of either civilisation or culture; it was more likely that his financial condition would be even worse than if he had stayed at home. By the turn of the century there was an atmosphere of despair creeping over the whole estate population. Ever since the halcyon days of the 1750s the sugar industry had progressively deteriorated, so that by the end of the century many of the owners were living off borrowed capital. One of the worst features, which contributed greatly to the industrial problems was the fact of 'absentee landlords'. (2)

In spite of the air of economic gloom over the island, missionary work was established. In 1754 the Moravians had established a work on a number of estates. The men who came to the island did so at the request of two respected Moravian families residing in Jamaica, the Fosters and the Barhams. Between them, these two families owned four sugar estates in the parish of St. Elizabeth. The missionaries, though invited by the owners, did not find their work easy owing to difficulties placed in their way by many of the overseers: indeed, the Moravian historian J. E. Hutton suggests that the first period of work, 1754-1800, was a failure for the simple reason that missionaries were too much under the control of the estates - "How could the negroes love a man who after preaching the Gospel on Sunday punished them for laziness on Monday - they were respected but not loved". (3) Direct evangelism was reduced to a minimum and they had to be content with

1. Catherall, op.cit. 8-9 letter discovered in a Jumble Sale in Manchester in 1959, kindly loaned to the writer by Mr. Ian Sargen B.A.
2. See below p. 110-112
3. Hutton, J.E. History of the Moravian Mission Lond. 1922. 52.

some form of teaching wherever they were given the opportunity, this they were content to do for they believed that education "could clear away the sloth of the nation, which had been caused by slavery". (1) W. J. Gardner in his History of Jamaica gives a useful account of the obstacles placed in the way of these first missionaries:

The little time the overseers were at first disposed to allow was soon refused when it was discovered that the missionaries were not willing to submit to the dictation of those who wished them merely to lecture the slaves on idleness, deception and other such vices, to the exclusion of the cheering and elevating promises of the gospel.

But the boundless love which is taught by the Saviour's sacrifice is ever fertile in expedients. There was a short period every day when the slave families gathered together to prepare and eat their evening meal. Then would the zealous missionaries go from hut to hut, and sitting down on a rude block of wood, often half blinded by the smoke of the fire the negro delights to kindle, tell in simple words the wondrous story of redeeming love....More might have been willing to listen to the teaching of the Moravians had their influence with the overseers been greater; but too often, when some terrified slave entreated the missionary to plead on his behalf, and save him from a threatened punishment, the plea was disregarded, and the stripes were inflicted with augmented severity. Yet there were those whose desire for instruction was so great that they would work on their grounds during Sunday night, that they might attend the Sabbath services. (2)

The Methodists under the leadership of Dr. Coke began work in the island in 1789, and by 1792 had established two churches in Kingston. (3) Both the Moravians and the Methodists were conservative in their attitude towards the planters and did all they could to ensure that there was no friction between themselves and the estates: Philip Curtin has suggested that the Methodists attempted to attract the white inhabitants by avoiding all political issues, especially those concerning slavery, and this they did by "maintaining a strict caste segregation in their chapels". (4) This was maintained for a considerable period, the Methodist missionary Robert Young, addressing the meetings of the Wesleyan Missionary Society in London in 1844, said that on his return to Jamaica after an absence of seventeen years he had noticed "how colour prejudice in Methodist Societies had been

1. Farley, O.W. 'Protestant Missionaries in the West Indies: Pioneers of a Non-Racial Society' in Race, The Journal of the Institute of Race Relations Vol. VI No. 5, Jan 1965. pp. 232-242
2. Gardner, W.J. History of Jamaica Lond. 1909, 199-202
3. Coke Thomas History of the West Indies Vol. I, II Lond. 1808
4. Curtin, P. Two Jamaicas Harvard Mass. 1955, 36.

almost entirely removed, on his inspection he met people of all colour in the same social circles". (1) This, however, did not bring much success with the plantocracy, for the Methodists were classed along with the rest of the 'dissenters' and therefore were under suspicion. Neither were they always as cautious as they might have been; apparently they did not always seek and gain the permission of the planters for their slaves to attend meetings of worship and instruction. (2)

Fifteen years before William Carey left to begin his work in India two ex-Negro slaves, both of them Negro ministers, left America as a result of the American War of Independence; becoming in fact the first Baptist missionaries. One, whose name is given as Amos, sailed to the Bahamas and there started a small work at New Providence in 1783, (3) which although largely forgotten seems to have been well established by 1815. A lengthy letter was printed in the Baptist Magazine for 1815, from the Baptist Church at New Providence. Amos and his people seem to have made a good impression, for it is recorded that at a baptismal service the Governor of the islands provided a guard of soldiers "to attend them from their place of worship to the water and in their return, that they might have no interruptions". (4) By 1836 the Baptist Missionary Society had two missionaries, Joseph Burton and E.F. Quant, working in the Bahamas, and there were twenty-two stations throughout the island with 490 members (5).

It is, however, to Amos' companion George Liele that the Baptist movement in Jamaica owes its origins. (6) Dr. Coke makes reference to the fact that "the Baptists have had societies among the negroes of Jamaica for nearly twenty years, and much good has arisen therefrom. Their success in that island, in the conversion of souls, has far exceeded that of the Moravian Brethren. But for want of documents the author is not able to enlarge upon this subject. He will only add that, in the course of his three visits to Jamaica, he was so far acquainted with their proceedings that he is confident they have been truly useful to hundreds of the negroes" (7)

1. Race, op.cit. 234

2. Rippon, op.cit. 332-334

3. The Baptist Magazine 1815, 212-213

4. *ibid.*

5. *ibid.* 1836. 270-292

6. There is sufficient autobiographical material to piece together the story of Baptist beginnings with a measure of certainty.

7. Coke, op.cit. 410

This statement by Dr. Coke suggests that the work of Liele and his followers was not too peculiar, or even heretical. Dr. Coke, of course, was familiar with the more emotional expressions of religious faith as demonstrated in revivals in England. His assessment is all the more important for his being closer in time to the early work of the Native Baptist Church than some of the later writers, who tend to leave the impression that Liele and his immediate followers were from the beginning sub-Christian. Two such writers, both Presbyterian missionaries, George Blyth and Hope Masterton Waddell, are strong in their disapproval of Liele and his leaders. Blyth writes:

Previously to the arrival of any European Baptist missionaries, several black persons had found their way to Jamaica from America, and possessing a slight knowledge of religious truth, they began to give such instruction to the slaves as they were capable of imparting. They took the name Baptist, and inculcated the peculiar dogmas of that body, along with a considerable mixture of superstition and truth on other subjects. (1)

Hope Masterton Waddell is even less polite:

Leile founded a large congregation in Kingston and founded that peculiar body known as the Native Baptists....His successors Gibb, Clarke, Moses and Baker, and others in various parts of the country, extended his system, and a queer system it was....(2)

Before an assessment of their judgement on the beginnings of the Native Baptist church and its founders is made, two factors need to be considered. It is understandable that these two men who both came from the more 'Puritanical' and academic climate of the Church of Scotland, which was not too kindly disposed to the more charismatic interpretation of the Church displayed in the Native Baptist Church, should find the 'afro-Christian sects' as Professor Curtin describes them, somewhat disturbing: within their own order they had in the early 30's to deal with the charismatic interpretations of Edward Irving and his Apostolicals. (3)

In the second place, the historical relationship between dissenters and the Presbyterians has not always been the most cordial, as witness the period 1640-1648 when there was a Presbyterian Parliament in England. One Baptist historian has said that "Baptists in their struggle for religious

1. Blyth, G. Reminiscence of Missionary life Lond. 1851, 159
2. Waddell, H.M. Twenty-nine years in the West Indies and Central Africa Lond. 1863. 25.
3. Chadwick, O. Victorian Church op.cit. 36.

liberty, found a foe in Presbyterians who desire 'presbyterial' in place of 'episcopal' uniformity". (1) Without doubt they had little sympathy with the sect-type of Christianity. (2) On several occasions the Baptist Missionary Society had differences of agreement with the Presbyterian Missionary Society over matter of Missionary policy and missionary personnel. (3) In essence, the outlook of the British Presbyterians was 'establishment' not 'voluntary'.

News of George Liels (sometimes known as Lisle or Sharp as his previous master's name had been Sharp), reached the ears of British Baptists when a letter written to Dr. Rippon from the Rev. Joseph Cook was published in the Baptist Annual Register. Joseph Cook was a native of Bath, Somerset, who had been influenced by the preaching of George Whitfield, and the work of the Countess of Huntingdon. After a period of training at the Countess's College in Wales he joined her mission to America, finally becoming a Baptist and settling at Euhaw, Upper Indian Land, South Carolina. (4) In his letter dated September 15th, 1790, Cook wrote of "a poor negro, commonly called among his own friends brother George" and went on, "he has been so highly favoured of God, as to plant the first Baptist Church in Savannah, and another in Jamaica". (5) We are told that Leile, after his baptism at the hands of the Rev. Matthew Moor, began to show signs of spiritual ability and was soon instructing his own 'coloured' people

the white brethren seeing my endeavours, and that the word of the Lord seemed to be blessed, gave me a call at a quarterly meeting to preach before the congregation. Afterwards Mr. Moor took the sense of the Church concerning brother Leile's ability, when it appeared to be their unanimous opinion that he was possessed of ministerial gifts, and according to the custom which obtains in some of the American churches, he was licensed as a probationer. He now exercised at different plantations, especially on those Lord's Day evenings when there was no service performed in the church to which he belonged; and preached about three years at Brunton land, and at Yamacraw, which is about half a mile away from Savannah. Mr. Henry Sharp, his master, being a deacon of the church which called George Leile to the work of the ministry, some years before his death gave

1. Torbet, op.cit. 46-47

2. Underwood, op.cit. 64

3. Waddell recounts a dispute with the B.M.S. over work in Calabar in 1854

4. Rippon, op.cit. 501-509

5. ibid. 333-334

him his freedom, only he continued in the family till his master's exit..... (1)

It is known that Leile and his family left Savannah when the English were defeated there, and with the help of a British officer, Colonel Kirkland, who loaned them the money they left America and journeyed to Jamaica, arriving in 1785. Leile travelled as an indentured servant to the Colonel, who also arranged for him to work for the Governor of Jamaica, General Campbell. For two years George Leile worked for the Governor, and at the end of that period he was able to repay Colonel Kirkland the money he owed. His first public preaching took place on the Kingston race course which, naturally, brought him some notoriety. His most important work, however, was the formation of a 'house church'. Leile's own description can best introduce us to the actual beginnings of the Baptist work in Jamaica:

I was born in Virgia, my father's name was Leile, and my mother's Nancy; I cannot ascertain much of them, as I went to several parts of America when young, and at length resided in New Georgia, but was informed by both white and black people, that my father was the only black person who knew the Lord in a spiritual way in that County; I always had a natural fear of God from my youth, and was often checked in conscience with the thoughts of death, which barred me from many sins and bad company. I knew no other way at that time to hope for salvation but only in the performance of good works....I began about September 1784 to preach in Kingston, in a small private house, to a good smart congregation, and I formed the church with four brethren from America besides myself, and the preaching took good effect with the poorer sort, especially the slaves. The people at first persecuted us both as meetings and baptisms, but God be praised, they seldom interrupt us now. We have applied to the HONOURABLE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY, with a petition of our distresses, being poor people, desiring to worship Almighty God according to the tenets of the Bible, and they have granted us liberty, and given us their sanction. Thanks be to God we have liberty to worship him as we please in Kingston. You ask about those who in a judgement of charity, have been converted to Christ. I think about four hundred and fifty. I have baptized four hundred in Jamaica. At Kingston I baptize in the sea, at Spanish Town in the river, at convenient places in the country. (2)

Leile was careful to organize his church in orderly fashion, the work being shared out amongst the members, and positions of leadership given to the most able, no doubt following the pattern he had learnt as a minister

1. Rippon, op.cit. 335. The Baptist Quarterly Holmes, E.A. George Leile: Negro Slavery Prophet of Deliverance. Vol. XX No. 8. 1964. 340-351  
Foundations Rusling, G.W. A Note on Early Negro Baptist History. Vol. XI No. 4. Oct.-Dec. 1968. 362-368
2. Rippon, op.cit. 332-334



in America. During his days in America he had been interested in schools, so that it is natural to find that amongst his activities in Kingston there is the founding of a school.

I have deacons and elders, a few, and teachers of small congregations in the towns and country, where convenience suits them to come together; and I am pastor. I preach twice on the Lord's Day, in the forenoon and afternoon, and twice in the week, and have not been absent six Sabbath Days since I formed the church in this country. I receive nothing for my services; I preach, baptize, administer the Lord's supper, and travel from one place to another to publish the gospel, and settle church affairs, all freely. I have one of the chosen men, whom I baptized, a deacon of the church, and a native of this country, who keeps the regulations of church matter; and I promote a FREE SCHOOL for the instruction of the children, both free and slaves, he is the schoolmaster. (1)

The person referred to in this letter is, in all probability, Thomas Nicholas Swingle, who became <sup>one</sup> of the leaders of the Native Baptist Church. Swingle in a letter to Rippon dated April 12th, 1793, confirms much of what Leile had written:

I am one of the poor, unworthy, helpless creatures born in this island, whom our glorious master Jesus Christ was graciously pleased to call from a state of darkness to the marvellous light of the gospel; and since our Lord hath bestowed his mercy on my soul, our beloved minister by consent of the church, appointed me a deacon, schoolmaster, and his principal helper. (2)

The need for a permanent building in which to worship, and no doubt a place with which to be identified, soon became apparent. Leile made a plea to the British Baptists for some material help in this matter.

There is no Baptist Church in this country but ours. We have purchased a piece of land, at the end of Kingston, containing three acres, for the sum of 155L. currency, and on it have begun a meeting-house fifty seven feet in length by thirty-seven in breadth. We have raised the brick wall eight feet high from the foundations, and intend to have a gallery. Several gentlemen, members of the house of assembly, and other gentlemen, have subscribed towards the building about 40L. The chief part of our congregation are slaves, and their owners allow them, in common, but three or four bits per week for allowances to feed themselves; and out of so small a sum we cannot expect anything that can be of service from them; if we did it would seem a scandal upon religion; and Free people in our society are but poor, but they are willing, both free and slave, to do what they can .....Rev. Sir, we think the Lord has put it in the power of the

1. Rippon, op,cit. 335
2. ibid. 542

Baptist Societies in England to help and assist us in completing our building, which we look upon will be the greatest undertaking ever was in this country.....And the Lord has put into your heart to enquire after us, we place all confidence in you, to make our circumstances known to several Baptist churches in England; and we look upon you as our Father, friend and brother. (1)

A later communication from Leile indicates that the appeal did not go unheeded, and also reveals that the church in Kingston had not wasted the help received. An interesting feature about this letter, as in the case of the letter of appeal, is the reference to the cordial relationship which seemed to exist between Leile and some of the authorities in the island.

Our meeting-house is now covered in, and the lower floor was completed the 24th of last month. We suppose we are indebted for lumber, lime bricks &c between 4 and 500L. I am not able to express the thanks I owe you for your kind attention to me, and the cause of God. The schoolmasters, together with the members of our church, return their sincere thanks for the books you have been pleased to send them, being so well adapted to the society, they have given great satisfaction.....I have purchased a piece of land in Spanish Town, the capital of this island, for a burying ground with a house upon it, which serves for a Meeting-house. James Jones Esq., one of the magistrates of this town, and secretary of the island, told me that the Hon. William Mitchell Esq., the Custos, had empowered him to grant me a licence to preach the Gospel, and they have given me liberty to make mention of their names in any congregation where we are interrupted. Mr. Jones had given permission for all his negroes to be taught the word of God. The gospel is taking great effect in this town. My brethren and sisters in general, most affectionately give their christian love to you, and all the dear lovers of Jesus Christ in your church at London, and beg that they, and all the other churches will remember the poor Ethiopian Baptist of Jamaica in their prayers...(2)

Whilst this letter dated January 1793 is encouraging, Leile is not blinded to the realities of his situation, for in a letter written in May 1792, he drew a vivid picture of the people he ministered to:

....the chiefest part of our society are poor illiterate slaves, some living on sugar estates, some on mountains, pens, and other settlements, they have no learning, no not to know so much as a letter in the book; but the reading of this covenant, once a month, when all are met together from the different parts of the island, keeps them in mind of the commandments of God. (3)

The evidence presented by Rippon certainly does not leave the impression

1. Rippon, op.cit. 336
2. ibid. 541-542
3. ibid. 343

of an irresponsible fanatic, but rather that of a balanced personality who knew exactly what he was doing and what he wanted.

Undoubtedly George Leile was the father of all Baptist work in Jamaica, and the chapel he built in Winward Road Kingston became not only the first Baptist church, but also the first dissenting chapel to be erected in the island. Nevertheless, the man to whom a great deal of credit must go for the extension of the Baptist movement in Jamaica was Moses Baker. It was his persistence in appealing to Dr. Ryland in Bristol, England, which eventually brought the much needed response of actual missionary help; though this did not materialise until 1814.

Moses Baker left behind him written accounts of himself, and he seems to have impressed a number of eyewitnesses who have also left us some picture of the man and his work. The two Native ministers, Leile and Baker, corresponded not only with Drs. Rippon and Ryland, but seem to have had contacts with other members of the Baptist church in England, not least members of the New Connexion General Baptists, who at their monthly conference, in December 1792, recommended to their churches that they respond to Leile's appeal for money for his new church. (1) It was to a friend in Leicestershire that Baker wrote a long letter, giving detailed information about himself and the church he had formed in the parish of St. James; the letter was published in the Evangelical Magazine in September 1803:

I am from New York, in North America, where my occupation was a barber. I was married September 4. 1778 to Susannah Ashton....a native of New York, by the Rev. W. Walters, agreeably to the rites of the Church of England: in which denomination we had been brought up, and learnt to read the scriptures, and to write a little. At the evacuation of New York in 1783 I was, with my wife and child, obliged to come to the island of Jamaica....(2)

Moses Baker on his arrival in Kingston was anything but a committed and practising Christian. He attempted to start his own barber's shop in Kingston, but soon moved to an estate in the parish of St. James, and there worked as a field worker on the Adelphi estate run by a Quaker named Winn. It was Mrs. Baker who first 'caught religion', through the influence of an old Negro named Cupid Wilkin. The influence of Susannah

1. Foundations Rusling op.cit. 367

2. The Evangelical Magazine 1803 365-371

and Cupid Wilkin soon persuaded Moses to accept the same faith. After Baptism by George Leile, Moses Baker was asked by his employer Mr. Winn if he would "instruct my negroes in religion and moral principles". (1) It was natural that as he worked amongst the slaves on the Adelphi estate a church should be formed and that it should follow the pattern of the Native Baptist:

We are of Baptist persuasion because we believe it agreeable to the scriptures - We hold to keeping the Lord's day throughout the year, in a place appointed for public worship, in singing Psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, and preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We hold to be baptized in a river, or place where there is much water, in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit; and receiving the Lord's Supper in obedience to his command; - We also hold with washing one another's feet, praying over the sick and anointing them with oil, in the name of the Lord Jesus; - We hold to appoint judges, and other such officers among us, to settle matters according to the word of God; - We hold not to the shedding of blood; and think ourselves forbidden to go to law with another before the unjust, but settle any matter we have before the saints; - We are forbidden to swear at all; and account ourselves bound not to eat blood, for it is the life of a creature; - We abstain from things strangled, and from meats offered to idols; - We are bound to submit ourselves to every ordinance of governors; as unto them that are sent by him, for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well. To avoid fornication, we permit none to keep each other except they be married, according to the word of God. If one of this religion should transgress and walk disorderly, and not according to the command we have received in the covenant of our Lord, he will be censured according to the word of God. If a brother or a sister should transgress any of these articles written in this covenant, so as to become a swearer, a fornicator, an adulterer, a covetous person, an idolator, a railer, a drunkard, an extortioner, or should commit any abominable sin; and not give satisfaction to the church, according to the word of God, we hold that such a one should be put away from among us; and we must not keep company nor eat with excluded persons. We hold to all the commandments, articles, covenants and ordinances recorded in the Holy Scriptures, as are set forth by our Lord and Master Jesus Christ and His Apostles, and to live to them as nigh as we possibly can, agreeably to the word of God....(2)

Comparing this covenant drawn up by Moses Baker with the following drawn up by Leile (3) the only difference is seen in articles No. 6, 8, 14, 15 and 20, which are omitted in the covenant of Baker; they are not significant omissions and can be accounted for by the fact that Baker's is recorded

1. The Evangelical Magazine Sept. 1803. 365-371
2. ibid.
3. Foundations Rusling op.cit. 362

for us in a letter and could well be in an abbreviated form; their absence, however, reveals no fundamental difference between the two men. Leile brought his covenant with him from America, he was obliged to have it published in Jamaica in order to quell rumours concerning what they believed, as well as a means of instruction:

The COVENANT of the Anabaptist Church, begun in America, Dec. 1777, and in Jamaica, Dec. 1783

- I We are of the Anabaptist persuasion, because we believe it agreeable to the scriptures. Matt. iii, 1,2,3, 2Cor. vi, 14-18.
- II We hold to keep the Lord's Day throughout the year, in a place appointed for Public Worship, in singing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, and preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Mark xvi, 2-6 Coll (sic) iii, 16.
- III We hold to be Baptised in a river, or place where there is much water, in the name of the Father, the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Matt. iii, 13-17. Mark xvi, 15,16. Matt. xxviii, 19
- IV We hold to receiving the Lord's Supper in obedience according to his commands. Mark xiv, 22-24. John vi, 53-57
- V We hold to the ordinance of washing of one another's feet. John xiii,2-17
- VI We hold to receive and admit young children into the Church, according to the word of God. Luke ii, 27, 28. Mark x, 13-16
- VII We hold to pray over the Sick, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord. James v, 54 (sic) 15
- VIII We hold to labouring one with another according to the word of God. Matt. xviii, 15-18
- IX We hold to appoint Judges and such other officers among us, to settle any matter according to the word of God. Acts vi, 1-3
- X We hold not to the shedding of blood. Genesis ix, 6. Matt. xxvi, 51,52
- XI We are forbidden to go to law one with another before the unjust, but to settle any matter we have before the Saints. I Cor. vi, 1-3
- XII We are forbidden to swear not at all (sic.) Matt. v, 33-37. James v, 12
- XIII We are forbidden to eat blood, for it is the life of a creature, and from things strangled, and from meat offered to idols. Acts. xv, 29
- XIV We are forbidden to wear costly raiments such as (sic) superfluity. I Peter iii, 3,4
- XV We permit no slaves to join the church without first having a few lines from their owners of their good behaviour. I Peter, ii, 13-16 I Thess. iii, 13.
- XVI To avoid Fornication, we permit none to keep each other, except they be married according to the word of God. I Cor. vii, 2. Heb. xiii, 4

- XVII If a slave or servant misbehave to their owners, they are to be dealt with according to the word of God. I Tim. i,6. Eph. vi, 5. I Pet.ii 18-21 Titus ii, 9-11
- XVIII If any one of the Religion should transgress and walk disorderly, and not according to the Commands, which we have received in this covenant, he will be censured according to the word of God. Luke xii, 47,48
- XIX We hold, if a brother or sister should transgree any of these articles written in this covenant, so as to become a swearer, a fornicator or adulterer; a covetous person, an idolater, a railer, a drunkard, an extortioner, or whoremonger; or should commit any abominable sin, and do not give satisfaction to the Church, according to the word of God, he or she, shall be put away from among us, not to keep Company, nor to eat with him. I Cor. v, 11-13
- XX We hold, if a brother or sister should transgress, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, and he or she, after being justly dealt with agreeable to the 8th article and be put out of the Church, they shall have no right or claim whatsoever to be interred into the Burying-ground during the time they are put out, should they depart life; but should they return in peace, and made a concession, so as to give satisfaction, according to the word of God, they shall be received into the Church again and have all privileges as before granted. 2 John i, 9,10. Gal. vi, 1-2. Luke xvii, 3-4
- XXI We hold to all other Commandments, Articles, Covenants and Ordinances recorded in the Holy Scriptures, as are set forth by our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ, and his Apostles, which are not written in this Covenant, and to live to them as nigh as we possibly can, agreeable to the word of God. John xv, 7-14. (1)

Many of those whom Baker gathered together and formed into a church were slaves who had arrived in one group and became known as the 'New Providence People'; this could well indicate the good work being done by Amos in New Providence in the Bahamas. (2) Baker's reputation was such that there were those of other missions prepared to vouch for his character, and who did not find any grounds for complaint concerning his teaching; such is the testimony of a member of the Moravian mission, who, writing from Montego Bay, April 12th 1818 gives some useful information:

The Baptists have also a mission here. Moses Baker, a brown preacher of that community, and my neighbour, living about five miles from hence, is a man of the right stamp, a blessed and active servant of our common Lord and Master, notwithstanding old age has almost blinded his eyes, and made his legs to move slowly. During his thirty year's labout in these parts, he has had to endure much persecution. In some

1. The Baptist Quarterly Vol. VII 1934-35. 20-26. E.A. Payne 'Baptist Works in Jamaica before the arrival of the Missionary'. Foundations Rusling op.cit. 362-364
2. Waddell, op.cit. 26.

instances, his ardent zeal for the cause of God may now and then, as with many, occasioned his running too fast, and brought trouble on himself. The most abominable lies have been propagated concerning him, and still serve to amuse idle people; nay I know one man who confined him for a whole night in the stocks, and others would have destroyed him, had they had him in their hands, but God had him in his . There are some clever and gifted black Baptist preachers in this country, may the Lord make them and us useful in his work....(1)

James Coultart wrote of Baker in 1822, "Mr. Baker is neither superstitious nor enthusiastic; he is evidently spiritual in all things; has much good sense,....I saw some instances of his decision and firmness in religious discipline which surprised me...." (2)

The nearest we get to any hint of criticism is that Baker, if anything, was somewhat avant-garde, and, as at all times, those who are avant-garde come under suspicion. The evidence so far reveals nothing of the fanaticism suggested by Blyth and Waddell. That the first church ~~covenanters~~ were extremely Biblical (they were, in fact, only following the pattern set down by John Calvin) is accepted. That they attempted to live according to a literal application of Scripture can be regarded as predictable; that it opens the way to extremism and heresy, if not controlled, cannot be denied - and this is still a problem in the twentieth century. (3) The two covenants reveal a simplicity and sincerity, a dignity and discipline not to be rejected lightly. Accepting that the majority of these men were still much influenced by their African culture, and that they suffered the lack of formal education - that is, Western style education - they were men of ability as shown by their covenants. Leile in particular reveals a remarkable degree of savoir-faire in his dealings with the community at large, coupled with a deep sense of duty to his own people as well as his convictions; especially for one supposedly ignorant and fundamentalist. Many mid-nineteenth century writers such as Blyth and Waddell tend, unfortunately, to assume that because these early leaders did not possess a vast amount of knowledge that this also indicated ~~the~~ lack of intelligence, which was far from being the case. Neither must we discount Leile's training

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1. Baptist Magazine 1819. 96.
2. Baptist Magazine 1822. 87
3. see Davies H. Christian Deviations Lond. 1957 for many examples of the dangers of extremes, not a few of them beginning in the nineteenth century.

in America; he was acceptable to many white Baptists as Cook indicated in his report to Rippon, therefore when he arrived in Kingston he was not a man unprepared. Having said this however, one needs to bear in mind that the Native Baptist Church was a loosely knit organisation; by its very nature as an independent structure it was open to attract many unstable persons, and to encourage the establishment of splinter groups. Blyth describes some he says came from Baker's church, who had but a "smattering of instruction", one of them "a pious man, but he has not yet given up the dogma that we must lend more to the teaching of the spirit, by dreams or otherwise, than the instruction of God's written word..." (1) This, of course, does not accord with the two covenants, of either Baker or Leile, and therefore Blyth is wrong to lay the blame upon Baker. Furthermore, there were important social pressures working against the Native Baptists, preventing their giving instruction. In all probability, those who Blyth and Waddell attacked were, in fact, not those who followed Leile, Baker, Swingle, Gibbs and other responsible Native Baptist leaders, but part of the general spectrum of native religions, all of whom were classed together as Baptists. It is difficult to be exact when talking about the Native Baptist Church after the immediate days of Leile and Baker, for the term came to be used generically much as, in the days of the Reformation in Europe, every radical group came to be called Anabaptist.

Professor Philip Curtin suggests that Baker, when given the responsibility for teaching on the estate of Mr. Winn, "departed from Leile's orthodoxy", but this does not seem to fit all the evidence, especially a comparison of the two covenants. (2) Baker's doctrine, he states, was primarily an emphasis "upon the spirit", but the Baker covenant makes mention of the spirit in the Trinitarian formula only. Against this it is noticeable that Dr. Curtin bases his judgements on Baker upon the works of Blyth and Waddell, who seem either to have been unaware of the Baker and Leile covenants, or ignored them. Dr. Curtin goes on to describe the Baptism used by the Native Baptists:

The ceremony of baptism by immersion also took on a new importance and became an elaborate initiation for new members. It was no longer a symbol, but the extension of Grace itself and thus led to practices that the white missionaries condemned as antinomianism. It led, as

1. Blyth, op.cit. 50-51

2. Curtin, Two Jamaicas, op.cit. 32-34



well, to the subordination of Christ as the chief religious figure and an emphasis on John the Baptist. This was only natural, since John had been the 'leader' who had admitted Christ to baptism, though it was also shocking to the European missionaries. (1)

There is, in this judgement, a failure to understand the importance of 'believer's baptism', and once again it is important to point out that in the covenants - and it is Baker who is being attacked primarily - there is no confusion between the baptism of John the Baptist and Christian baptism: in fact there is no mention of John at all. Professor Curtin's only evidence at this point comes from Blyth and Waddell who were, by reason of their background, antagonistic to 'believer's baptism'; the innuendos concerning antinomianism seem unwarranted, for no evidence is forthcoming that baptism led to this. That baptism led to a spirit of independence is another question; anyone who has read in the history of the eighteenth century England will be aware that 'antinomianism' was a smear word bandied about by Calvinists and anti-Calvinists alike, its usage having to be qualified by the viewpoint of those who use it, and by the evidence that they adduce for this usage. Nor were Presbyterians well situated to level this kind of abuse, those who accepted the 'Westminster Confessions' were just as likely to become heretical, as evidence the eighteenth century when, along with many General Baptists, many Presbyterians became Unitarian. Dr. Curtin's judgements are strongly reminiscent of Blyth's reference to Baptist doctrine as "the peculiar dogmas of that body" (2) and Waddell's "queer system". (3)

It is, of course, true that Thomas Burchell refused to accept a number of Baker's church at Flamstead as even being Christian; writing to his brother, William Burchell, he refers to "prejudices, - the obstinate, headstrong prejudices of ignorance, who can describe them?" Later his biographer writes "Mr. Burchell felt himself justified in constructing a new church out of the better materials of the former society...." (4) which surely suggests that not all of Baker's people had lapsed into superstition. When John Rowe, the first British Baptist missionary to arrive in Jamaica,

1. Curtin, Two Jamaicas, op.cit. 34

2. Blyth, op.cit. 159

3. Waddell, op.cit. 25

4. Burchell, W.F. Memoir of Thomas Burchell, Lond. 1849. 86-87

sent a report to Dr. Hoby, one of the leading Baptists in Britain, he intimated that there were particular problems confronting Moses Baker which caused the laxity Burchell and other missionaries found in the Native Church, and which some have mistaken for the results of the supposed unorthodox teaching of Baker:

You will have heard (I suppose) of the state of Mr. Baker's people, about seventeen miles from hence. They are not formed into a church state. He has not for several years administered the Lord's Supper, more does he know how many there are who he has baptized. He has not, I think, baptized any more for more than three years past.... (1)

Le Compere, the second Baptist from Britain to journey out to work in Jamaica as a missionary, also reported back to the B.M.S. Committee that there were signs of great indolence and laxity and describes the scene:

....negro Baptist, who amount to several thousands, in or near, Kingston....they have been led into various extravagances and mistakes, and been split into parties, under the guidance of unskilled and ignorant preachers....I for the first time in my life, administered the ordinance of the Lord's Supper to about two-hundred communicants. There are more than ten times as many, who have been members of the different Baptist churches, into which the negroes around Kingston have been divided; but in consequence of their circumstance as slaves, and the irregularities that have prevailed among them, we had no more at this time. Their ignorance is so great, that I am obliged to assume more power than I should wish to take upon me if there were a number of judicious christians, with who I could consult and place any dependence on their judgement....(2)

But this was not the whole picture and, in fact, only concerned the church in Kingston, whereas Coultart's report about the Churches around Montego Bay was far from depressing. (3)

Had not the Jamaican Plantocracy been so blinded by their fears and their false assumptions concerning dissenters, much of the revolutionary spirit which inevitably came through the medium of the Native Baptist Church could well have been controlled but, instead, they made it impossible for men such as Leile and Baker to look after their people. It says much for these men that they saw what was happening and did all they could to ease the situation by appealing to the British Baptists for help and guidance. Even here the plantocracy made it difficult.

1. Periodical Accounts Vol.V. 1815, 505 Baptist Magazine 1815, 165
2. Baptist Magazine 1817. 73
3. see above, p.64

The reason for this apparent lack of pastoral care is simple, for the law denied the Native Baptists any legal identity. This must have a strong bearing on the fact that the growing Native Baptist community under the leadership of Leile and Baker, could not become a cohesive whole, even if they wanted to, for the law forbade it. The situation in 1804 is well described in a letter from Andrew Fuller to John Owen of the British and Foreign Bible Society:

Being lately in Town & at the house of Mr. Butterworth, Bookseller in Fleet Street, I there met with a Mr. Campbell, a Methodist minister lately come fm. Jamaica, and who I learned had been imprisoned there for preaching. Mr. C. appeared to me to be an intelligent, serious, and upright man. I asked him several questions respecting the state of things in Jamaica. Q. Is the number of Methodists very considerable in the island. A. They are not so numerous as the Baptists, of whom there are many thousands. Q. Are the Baptist ministers white men or blacks. A. They are either blacks, or men of colour. One of them is a Mr. Sweigle, a very respectable character. Q. You know Mr. C. that there are heady men in all denominations; have none of your, or our ministeres encouraged a spirit of revolt or discontent among the slaves? A. I know of no such thing. Q. Have none of the slaves on embracing the Xn. religion, become more discontented with their situation? A. I believe not; but rather the contrary. Q. You know what has taken place at St. Domingo, have the slaves in Jamaica in general never discovered a wish to follow that example? I never saw anything of that kind. Q. What then could be the occasion of so rigid a law? A. I do not know, unless it were this: there is a number of female slaves who are kept by their owners for the gratification of their desires, and some of them becoming Xns have refused to comply with their wishes. For this they have been flogged, and it appears to us that in consequence of this, the christianizing of them has been opposed. Q. But has nothing been alleged or proved wh. at least might bear an ill construction, as the ground of the law? A. nothing. (1)

The restrictions of 1804 were such that in Kingston only those favoured with a license from the Common Council were allowed to preach. In England there were protests, Fuller, Booth and Hall presented a memorial to the Government, as did the Dissenting Deputies, who in 1805 were informed that "his Majesty in council disallowed the act of assembly, the dissenting ministers in Jamaica had resumed their stations". )2) Ther interference of the British Government did not really perturb the Jamaican Assembly: for one thing England was too far away, and for another the Assembly had never paid much attention to a distant Parliament.

1. Letter of Andrew Fuller to John Owen, March 17th 1804. B.M.S. Archives
2. Manning, B. The Protestant Dissenting Deputies Lond. 1952, 426.

In 1807 another law was passed, designed by the plantocracy for the specific purpose of curtailing, if not abolishing the work of the dissenting communities. The law forbade anyone from preaching or from teaching the natives who was not licensed so to do. Licences would only be granted if it could be proved that the applicant was a bona fide minister of a recognized religious body. Kingston was the centre of this opposition, and it was in Kingston that most difficulties were first encountered. The Common Council passed an order in 1807 which read:

Whereas it is not only highly incumbent upon, but the first and most serious duty of all magistrates and bodies politic, to uphold and encourage the due, proper, and solemn exercise of religion and worship of God:

And whereas nothing can tend more to bring true devotion, and the practice of religion, into disrepute, than the pretending, preaching, teaching and expounding the word of God as contained in the Holy Scriptures, by uneducated, illiterate and ignorant persons, and false enthusiasts:

And whereas the practise of such pretended preaching.....to large numbers of persons of colour, and negroes of free condition, and slaves assembled together in houses, negro-houses, huts and the yards thereunto....hath increased to an alarming degree....Be it therefore enacted and ordained by the Common Council of the city and Parish of Kingston....that from and after the first day of July next, no person not being duly authorized, qualified, and permitted, as is directed by the laws of this island, and great Britain, and in the place mentioned in such licence, shall under pretence of being a minister of religion of any sect or denomination, or being a teacher or expounder of the Gospel, or any parts of the Holy Scriptures; presume to preach or teach, or offer up public prayer, or sing psalms, in any meeting or assembly of negroes, or persons of colour, within this city and parish....(1)

This law was directed at destroying such movements as the Native Baptist Church, for it was obvious that none of its leaders could hope to qualify.

The penalties for breaking this law can only be described as vicious:

And in case any person shall in any way offend herein, every such person if a white person shall suffer such punishment by fine not exceeding one hundred pounds, or by imprisonment in the common gaol for any space not exceeding three months, or both; or if a free person of colour, or free black, by fine not exceeding one hundred pounds, or imprisonment in the work-house for a space of time not exceeding three months, or both or if a slave, by imprisonment and hard labour in the work house, for a space not exceeding six months, or by whipping, not exceeding thirty-nine stripes, or both, as shall be in these cases respectively judged.....(2)

1. Augier and Gordon Source op.cit. 147-148
2. *ibid*, 147-148

Even if a licence was granted there were certain restrictions as to the times one could worship, so much so that it was almost impossible to be able to gather a congregation together:

And be it further enacted and ordained that no person being licenced or permitted, shall use public worship in any places within this city and parish which may be licenced earlier than the hour of six o'clock in the morning, or later than sunset in the evening, under the penalty of such punishment by fine, not exceeding three hundred pounds, or by imprisonment in the common gaol not exceeding three months, or both, as shall be in that respect adjudged. (1)

The Jamaican authorities were no doubt encouraged by certain events in England. In 1811 Lord Sidmouth, disturbed by what he called the abuse of religious liberty being perpetrated by Dissenters, namely the manner in which they allowed improper persons to become ministers: "cobblers, tailors, pig-drovers, and chimney-sweepers", proposed a Bill that would in future ensure that no person would be allowed to obtain a licence as a minister, unless he were recommended by "six respectable housekeepers of his own denomination."

The Dissenting Deputies strongly opposed such action, and the House of Lords was inundated with petitions against the proposal. The opposition to the Bill, led by Lord Erskine, won the day, the Bill being defeated after the second reading, on May 21st. (2)

The Baptist Magazine for 1809-1811 has repeated references to the continued persecution of dissenters in spite of Governmental statements on the subject; reference to the subject in the 1811 edition of the Magazine asks the pertinent question of the Governor, why was it he still assented to the Kingston Act, when the British Government opposed it? The same issue of the Magazine gives an interesting account of the act as it was at that particular period, and indicates one of the ways in which the Assembly avoided any severe clash with the British Government.

The Preamble of the Act states the necessity of some precaution for the purpose of excluding from the exercise of sacred function all ignorant and ill-designing persons; and then proceeds to point out the qualifications necessary for a Preacher, which is nearly the same as required in England, only with this difference, that £1. 6s. 8d. is to be paid for the certificate.

It is further enacted, that no person shall be licensed who shall not

1. Auger & Gordon, op.cit. Sources 147-148

2. Skeats, H.S. A History of the Free Churches of England Lond. 1868, 555-558

appear to the Court to be a proper person to preach, &c:-  
 That no Meeting be held for worship, unless approved by the Court,  
 and the fee of £1. 6s. 8d. be paid for the certificate:- Further, That  
 every preacher intending to apply for a licence, must advertise his  
 intention in the Gazette, &c. for four successive weeks before he makes  
 application to the Court; the same kind of notice must also be given  
 of the intention of licensing a house for worship.  
 Persons preaching without licence, or in a place unlicensed, to forfeit  
 50L or be imprisoned in the common gaol three months.  
No assembly of Negroes for worship before sunrise, or after sun-set,  
under the penalty of 50L for the preacher, and 10L for every hearer...  
 This act is to continue in force from 30th of December 1810, until the  
 31st of December 1811 and no longer.  
 Even this circumstance, which seems trivial, is most artfully contrived  
 to elude the effects of the King's disallowance of the law. For by  
 the time the disallowance is notified, the law will have expired, and  
 a fresh law will have been enacted....(1)

This kind of persecution was to continue for many years, and the  
 Abolitionists recognised that there was little they could do about it, as  
 is seen in a reply by Wilberforce to a letter from John Ryland of the Bristol  
 Academy, on the same question. Wilberforce had apparently discussed the  
 question with Mr. Stephen, his brother-in-law, (2) (later to become Permanent  
 Secretary to the Colonial Office) who had recently returned from Barbados,  
 the conclusion reached by the two men was that the law, though illegal,  
 was manipulated by the Assembly, who would continue to make it difficult  
 for the dissenting churches in the island. (3)

There can be no doubt that one of the reasons for such persistent and  
 vicious attacks on the dissenting community in Jamaica was the fact that  
 the plantocracy saw the rapid spread of the Native Baptist Church as a  
 danger signal. The real danger was the emergence of a vociferous and power-  
 ful body of lay people within the Native Church. The Native preachers were  
 having a distinct effect upon the slave population, and were exercising an  
 influence and an authority which could only result in disaster for the  
 planters. The planters were, of course, right to be afraid, as later events  
 proved; within the system of slavery the least opportunity for the slave to  
 express the belief that he is an individual is an encouragement for him to  
 demand the right to live and act as a human being; the first human right is,

1. Baptist Magazine 1811. 477-478. see also 1809, 384-385, 1810, 41
2. Stephen, L. Life of Sir James Fitzjames Stephen Lond. 1895, 17
3. Cox, F.A. History of the Baptist Missionary Society Vol. II Lond. 1842, 20

of course, to be free in this particular sense. (1) Both Leile and Moses Baker had experienced the world of Slavery, and now they were experiencing the world of freedom, no matter how prescribed their freedom was.

Within the Native Baptist movement there were many off-shoots which developed into centres of revolutionary activity far removed from the original intentions of Leile and Baker. Men were expressing their feelings in words which were later to become actions, and one of the methods which enabled them to have control over their own people was the method Leile must have brought with him from America. It was a well known method which was common practise amongst the Methodists in England as well as Jamaica, namely the Class ticket; the Presbyterians also made effective use of the Communion card in keeping a check on worshipers. It was a simple system, each member was issued with a ticket on which was written his name and the name of the minister. It was a sign of his acceptance by the church, and usually indicated that the person in question had undergone some form of instruction in order to qualify for membership. That such simple methods are capable of being corrupted is undeniable, and not a few were able to 'purchase' their ticket. In the hands of the unscrupulous this system was used not only to make money, but also to exercise authority over the unsuspecting. To the planters it was an iniquitous system which gave the slave a false sense of security and an exaggerated sense of his own importance. It produced in the slave a new concept of his own social standing and could only lead to rebellion. In the hands of the missionaries, however, it could be used to good effect in the management of the increasing congregations. Professor Curtin overstates his case when he suggests that the ticket was "the Christian equivalent of the fetishes carried by Negroes in the Gambia region of West Africa..." (2) It seems strange that he does not suggest that, even more powerful than the ticket and far more liable to be construed as a fetish, were the two sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Both these sacraments are based upon a profound spiritual mystery, not easy to explain, yet dramatic in their presentation of initiation and continual commitment. The act of Baptism far more than the holding of a ticket was liable to create a revol-

1. see modern demands for this in The Charter of the United Nations pp. 4-5  
2. Curtin, op.cit. 37

utionary spirit, for it signified that they were new men belonging to a new people, resulting in a demand to be treated as such. Even the planters seem to make no mention about this particular aspect, though it could be argued that they did all they could to ensure that the Negro had little opportunity for either. That the ticket was seen by the planters as a symbol of a freedom movement is not denied, but to argue that by so using the 'ticket system' the European Baptists were "moving towards the Afro-Christian synthesis" seems to be reading too much into what was, in fact, a simple expedient for the organisation of a fast growing community, administratively desirable in plantocratic Jamaica and industrial England alike. This is certainly how the European Baptists understood the method which they inherited from the Native Baptist groups founded by Leile and Baker; they saw nothing superstitious or syncretistic about the practice. Knibb denied any superstition attached to the tickets, after making a thorough investigation (1) and Thomas Burchell was happy to adopt such a system in order that he might be able to cope with the tremendous amount of work demanded of him at Montego Bay, which involved over 103 miles of riding each week to meet the needs of the 1,000 members and 3,000 inquirers. (2)

James Coultart, one of the early Baptist missionaries, describes how he used the ticket method and utilised his leaders to good effect:-

Before my return to England I drew out a rough set of rules for the consideration of the leaders and people, thinking if God spared me to occupying my station again it would be well to see their effects, and judge of the influence if strictly attended to, before they were proposed to the church as permanent rules for its discipline. These rules have been strictly enforced, notwithstanding the great opposition made to them by the leaders, and their good effects are, through the blessing of God, very visible. Each member has a ticket, which he or she received quarterly; and as each person must come for a ticket, we get a partial acquaintance with them all, and find out the evils which have been too long kept secret. Within the last three weeks I have distributed 48 score of tickets, and had an opportunity of speaking to that number.....Our leaders meeting is every week, when we hear all complaints, and dismiss those who are unrighteous persons, and admit such as offer and are approved, into the various classes, in which they remain upon probation a longer or shorter time....(3)

One of the fears produced by this system was that it did give certain

1. Winton, op.cit. 204
2. Cox, op.cit. 69
3. Baptist Magazine 1820, 438-439



powers to the lay leaders who were often placed in charge of the distribution of the tickets, they had the power to grant or withhold membership. The importance of the Native leaders to the Baptist missionaries is acknowledged by Mr. Burton who was to help Coultart at Kingston; he wrote in 1829:

Your missionaries occupy an humble station on the gradual scale of excellent means; and yet the principal part of the good which is done is accomplished by means that are humbler still. The slaves who have received the truth are, among their fellow-slaves, the most effectual preachers of the Gospel. Poor men and poor women, whom we denominate 'Leaders', because of their religious employment, are the chief instrument in filling our places of worship, and in bringing sinners unto God. And they do bring them in a manner that must give angels very much of the employment of praise. (1)

Knibb, however, was a little more conservative when it came to the distribution of the tickets, for he told the Select Committee of the Commons that only he distributed the tickets personally at Falmouth. (2)

F. Deaville Walker, a Methodist writer, recounts how sensitive the authorities were over the sign of the ticket, seeing in it indications of revolutionary intent on the part of the dissenters:-

On one occasion, in the parish of St. Thomas, Jamaica, a mysterious slip of paper with strange signs and words that appeared to suggest a conspiracy was found in the box of a dead slave. The overseer was alarmed and took the treasonable document to the chief magistrate who, in turn, convinced that trouble was brewing, summoned all his fellow justices. The troops were ordered out, plantations were visited, and Negro cabins were searched. More than a hundred similar papers were discovered, and the slaves whose names they bore were handcuffed and taken into custody. Every paper bore the signature of the Methodist missionary- certain proof that he was implicated in this conspiracy! and he was at once summoned before the court to answer the charge. The terrible papers, so suggestive of revolt and massacre, turned out to be Methodist class-tickets; the astonished magistrates learned that the treasonable words were a perfectly harmless verse of Holy Scripture, and the mysterious signs were simply 'Matt.xi.12'. The missionary was discharged with a solemn warning. (3)

During the early 1820s the ticket system became a basis for some complaints of unchristian practices brought against the Baptist missionaries by the Presbyterians, which were to be revived again soon after eman-

1. Baptist Magazine , 1829, 488
2. Parliamentary Papers Vol. 20 Commons Reports from Committees, 1831-1832 Slavery - West India Colonies. 282
3. Walker Deaville, F. The Call of the West Indies Lond. n.d. 69

cipation. (1)

Though it is possible to write off the Native Baptist Church as being illiterate, fanatical and superstitious, this is too much of a generalisation to be of any value, for it needs constantly to be borne in mind that it was a term that covered a wide variety of movements, from the orthodox type of Baptist church of that period to the semi-political and revolutionary coterie. Even Knibb's statement before the Select Committee was exaggerated in its attempt to make a distinction, as is evidenced by the many reports telling of the quality of not a few of the leaders. (2) The Congregationalist missionary and historian, W.G. Gardner, in his work A History of Jamaica gives a balanced view of the Native Baptist Church when he writes:

Of the Native Baptists it is not easy to say much; no returns exist, and few materials remain from which to form any estimate of their actual number. But it is undeniable that the successors of Leile and Baker were not men of the same spirit. The best of their members, and the really good people who had joined the numerous offshoots from the church of the former, were attracted by the superior teaching and more scriptural discipline of the missionaries, and their withdrawal left the superstitious and often grossly immoral men who had assumed the office of teachers and leaders to pursue their course with less restraint. With few exceptions, native Baptist Churches became associations of men and women who, in too many cases, mingled the belief and even practice of Myalism with religious observances, and who perverted and corrupted what they retained of those....(3)

Blyth and Waddell in particular, in making their generalisations leave the impression that from the very beginning the Baptists in Jamaica practised some perverted form of Christianity, and that Negro Baptists naturally perverted the faith, which does not do justice to the facts.

When the first British Baptists arrived in Jamaica, even though, as we have seen, there were many problems, problems of organisation, problems of misguided teaching, even of no teaching at all amongst the Native Baptist converts, the ground was well-prepared for their coming. Their forerunners in this missionary enterprise, those who had borne the brunt of the persecution inflicted by a hostile plantocracy - Leile, Baker, Swingle and Gibbs and the countless number of men whose names have not been recorded - left a ground ready for harvest.

1. see below p. 230

2. Walker Deaville, op.cit. 318-319

3. Gardner, op.cit. 357

## Section B. The Arrival of the British Baptists

### 1. Arrival of John Rowe

By 1814 the British financiers were no longer looking rapaciously at Jamaica, instead they now gazed with even greater anticipation upon America, Asia and, eventually, Africa. The island in the sun had lost the capacity to satisfy her many lovers; the spark of eternal wealth had given way to the dull lethargy of a declining economy. Instead of profit, she now offered increasing debt, plantations were standing idle and their property lay in disrepair. (1) Jamaican sugar no longer commanded the response that once she did, men no longer bartered their soul to possess her. Yet there were still those who remained loyal to her, refusing to let her go; she was their possession, theirs to squeeze out every last drop of wealth, the plantocracy was still defiant, still master of the land.

It was true that fewer people now saw in Jamaica a land worthy of speculation, nevertheless there were those in England who saw the island as needing a different kind of investment; compassion and not avarice;, men and not money; significantly this new importation of men was to be of a different kind than had hitherto been experienced by Jamaica.

Already the Moravians and the Methodists, under great difficulties, had forged a slight if somewhat guarded missionary link between England and the island of Jamaica; Dr. Thomas Coke in his A History of the West Indies indicated how the plantocracy restricted the work of the Dissenters, under the 1802 Act (2) complicating missionary work and demanding that all missionary communications and statements be an exercise in the art of diplomacy: not that they always succeeded in this.

The fact that there had existed in Jamaica a Native Baptist community for some thirty years, plus frequent reports of repressive activities perpetrated with the connivance of the Jamaica Assembly, stirred the ire of not a few of the Baptist leaders in Britain; among those who heeded the plight of their Jamaican brethren was Dr. John Ryland, President of the Bristol Academy. Moreover, the events which had caused Abraham Booth and others to petition the home Government in 1804 persisted to such an extent

1. Grange, P. King Creole Lond. 1967 gives vivid descriptions of declining plantations.
2. Coke, op.cit. 444-445. 'Fish the Methodist man applied for a license and obtained it, Sweigle and Reid...were refused.' See also Clarke, J. Memorials of the Jamaican Mission Lond. 1869 18-30

that in 1807 Wilberforce wrote in a letter to John Ryland that it was "a shocking violation of all religious liberty". (1) That same year Ryland discussed with Wilberforce the possibility and the practicality of the British Baptists joining in the work already begun in the West Indies; Wilberforce's reply indicated that the question of native preachers and the natural prejudices directed against the Dissenters were being discussed at Parliamentary level and would be a possible source of objection:

As to your question concerning the probability of Dr. Coke's ordination being more respected than an ordinary license, I really can give no decided opinion. Persons who have resided in that island would be better able to judge. But I am inclined to believe that preachers in a white skin would be likely to be treated better and respected more than black ones. This is all I can now say. When meeting of Parliament shall bring me within reach of West Indians again, I will try in private to soften prejudices of some of the leading men connected with that country; but I fear that prejudices of the resident colonists, and their irreligious habits, are such as to render all attempts to soften them unavailing. May the Almighty open a door which no man can shut. (2)

Ryland indicated his concern for Jamaica when he wrote his reactions to this reply at the bottom of Wilberforce's letter; "I have waited with great anxiety several years for some one to send. (3)

When the vital cry for help arrived from the ageing native pastor, Moses Baker, it was but the climax to a succession of direct and indirect appeals which had reached the ear of British Baptists: the moment was right for positive action; Ryland had no alternative but to respond; this response proved to be the inauguration of Baptist Missionary Society work in Jamaica, and in the judgement of Dr. Cox, who was well acquainted with Ryland, "The application of Moses Baker was but the incidental means of reanimating a long cherished feeling, and giving it a practical direction". (4) As early as 1806 Ryland had written to Baker asking if the sending of a Baptist missionary would help the situation; such help would have been welcomed had the time been opportune, but trouble over the payments of the building of the Winward Road Church in Kingston had financially embarrassed Leile and his members; Leile in fact spent a period of 'three

1. Letters of Wilberforce to Ryland Bristol Baptist College.

2. Cox, op.cit. 20

3. ibid. 18

4. ibid.

years, five months and ten days' in prison because of it, plus a charge of seditious preaching. (1) By this time also the restrictive by-laws were fully operative and their desired effects were being achieved. During the period from 1802 until 1813 the presence of a British Baptist in the land would have achieved only further embarrassment for the native church.

During the period prior to 1813 one can detect a slight, though not unimportant change in the attitude of the plantocracy which made it possible for Ryland and the B.M.S. to respond more readily to Baker's appeal in 1813 than it had been hitherto. A number of the proprietors were acknowledging that the religious instruction of their slaves was beneficial; there were even those who were favourably disposed towards the Baptists. Pressure was being brought to bear by the work of the abolition movement in England, and the success of the nonconformists already in the island; tacit recognition of this was an act passed in 1816 appointing curates to assist the Established clergy in the work of propagating the gospel amongst the slaves, even to the extent of providing part of their stipend. (2)

This slight change in attitude was an encouragement to men such as John Ryland and, in fact, is a corrective to the statement made by Dr. D. A. Ryall who supports the theory put forward by J. W. Kilpatrick "that the Wesleyans and the Baptists met with more persecution than other sects because they did not come to Jamaica at the invitation of the Planters"... (3) William Knibb in his evidence before the Select Committee of the House of Commons in 1832 intimated that a Bristol Proprietor named Arthur Foulkes was involved in the sending of John Rowe, the first Baptist missionary. (4) J. F. Winks, editor of the Baptist Reporter and a leading personality within the General Baptist Missionary Society, also stated that "The proprietor of an estate, concerned for the best interest of his slaves, requested that the Society would send out a missionary", (5) while a pamphlet dated 1842 makes the same statement. (6)

The final appeal from Baker came at a crucial point in the thirty

1. Foundations Rusling op.cit. 366
2. Patterson, op.cit. 207-208. Lewis, M.G. op.cit. 120-121
3. Ryall, D.A. Organisation of Missionary Societies etc. Lond. Ph.D. 1959, 40  
Race Vol. VI. No. 5 January 1965 op.cit. 233
4. Parliamentary Papers Vo. 20. op.cit. 268
5. Winks, J.F. The Baptist Jubilee Memorial Lond. 1842, 65.  
Sketch of the Commencement & Present State of the B.M.S. Lond. 1842  
The Baptist Magazine 1824 449
6. ibid.

years or so of Baptist work on the island; the Native Baptists were in grave danger of being swallowed up in the pseudo-christian cultus, which was taking full advantage of the enforced lack of leadership. Baker saw clearly what was happening, and also what was needed. Dr. Ernest Payne, commenting on the Church Covenant of George Leile, writes:

In view of the sincerity and simplicity here revealed, the danger of fanaticism and heresy, the difficulties and the opportunities of work among people who covenanted in this fashion, and the special responsibility of the Englishmen for the West Indies, it is not surprising that Dr. Ryland and his friends did not rest till they were able to send missionaries to Jamaica. (1)

That the Baptist cause had withstood this period of enforced instability and its resultant heresies sufficiently to re-emerge in better shape than before says much for the initial work of Leile and Baker.

Ryland's dream of work in Jamaica became a reality. The good doctor informed Wilberforce of the decision to send John Rowe, a young student at the Bristol Academy. Rowe was born at Lopen, a hamlet near South Petherton, Somerset, on September 14th 1788. About the age of fifteen he was apprenticed to the glove trade at Yeovil, and in 1807 became a member of the Baptist church there. By 1811 John Rowe had shown such promise that the church sent him to the Bristol Academy to study under Dr. Ryland. In 1813 he married Sarah Grundy, a member of the Broadmead Church, Bristol, and from this church he and his wife were commissioned to work in Jamaica. (2)

Wilberforce exerted his influence on Rowe's behalf, introducing him by name to some of his influential friends and acquaintances, a certain peer in particular: )3)

I am almost fearful lest I may be using an undue liberty with letting you see the note I have this day received from him; but I send it to you for your perusal trusting to your promising me (and if you promise I know you will perform) not to mention Ld. (?). Tho I have no objection to you telling our common friend, that Mr. Rowe would be recommended to the Duke of Manchr. by one of the principal members of the Government in reliance on his prudence, sobriety and as well as the other requisite qualifications.....

This influence in Governmental circles was of little help to Rowe as his

1. Payne, Freedom in Jamaica op.cit. 26
2. Baptist Magazine 1818, 47. Wilberforce letters to Ryland op.cit. 1814
3. Wilberforce letters to Ryland op.cit. this particular letter dated Jan. 10th 1814 has the name of a certain Lord scratched out, whether by Ryland or Wilberforce is not certain.

report to Ryland testifies:

The day after my arrival at Montego Bay I saw Mr. Vaughan and found he had been expecting me. He told me that had I come out under any other name than B. I should probably have met with more success as people here in general were more prejudiced against them than against any other sect. He told me he had been favourable to religion because his (slaves) were better for it and therefore had given Mr. Baker 50£ a year for instructing them, but that he was unable to do anything for me only if I wished to come and see him at any time I was very welcome and he would give me a room for my use for a week or more whenever I found it convenient to come; but intimated that were he to form any intimacy with me and give me constantly an apartment in his house it would be rather disgusting to his friends and acquaintances. (1)

The B.M.S. could only have reached the decision to send a man to Jamaica after very serious consideration, for they were not a wealthy society, and had only been in existence as a missionary society for just over twenty years; but the more serious consideration was the fact that the West Indies as a missionary field presented serious political problems for any missionary enterprise: the whole social structure of the West Indies being based upon slavery clashed with the fundamental Baptist concern for liberty. Rowe was soon made aware of this problem, for he wrote:

So critical indeed is the present period of political controversy between the mother country and the West Indian colonies, and so much are missionaries, without cause or desire, involved in it, that I scarcely know what to do more than to wait for a while to see the results which, however, is much against my inclination and comfort. (2)

Indeed, the situation was such that the attitude towards Baptists in some political circles in England was governed by prejudice, they were even blamed along with the Methodists for the insurrection which occurred in Barbados in 1815, even though it was proved that there were no Baptist missionaries working in that island. (3)

The Society's awareness of these difficulties is seen in the first letter of instruction issued to Rowe in his departure for Jamaica, (4) although the letter advocated caution, it still left the way open for the missionary to follow the dictates of his conscience, or as the letter put it, "Christian duty"; obviously the exact interpretation of this would depend

1. Letter of Rowe. B.M.S. archives dated March 14th 1814

2. Clark, J. Dendy W., Phillippo, J.M. The Voice of Jubilee Lond. 1865. 142

3. Clarke, J. Memorials of the Jamaica Mission Lond. 1869, 73

4. see above, p. 33-34

depend upon the character of the missionary. It was certainly more flexible than the later instruction issued to Knibb and others, with their explicit orders to refrain from any activity that could be possibly construed as political action. (1) It is not surprising, then, to find the first statement issued by the Society to the denomination concerning the new missionary adventure in Jamaica reading something like an apologetic, fulfilling the need to explain their action:

Our first missionary to the island, Mr. John Rowe, has conducted himself with prudence and caution, and yet has manifested integrity, self denial and earnest concern to promote the object of his mission. The expense at first was very considerable, through the excessive dearness of provisions, but he has given all along the strongest evidence of a desire to observe the strictest economy, and has the prospect of very soon supporting himself, if not gratifying his own wish to refund to the society a part of what has been expended on his support....(2)

The Committee had also to ensure that the supporters of the Society felt that there was a future for work in such a situation, thus they included with the report a copy of a letter from Rowe indicating that the work, though difficult, was hopeful:

As to the present prospects of the mission, little can be said favourably: but I feel confident that after a few years they will be better. It appears however, that the success of the mission for some time will be inconsiderable - I feel persuaded that the most certain and permanent good effects would rise from the children of slaves on the estates being instructed to read, and taught the first principles of christianity by fit person, under the sanctions of the respective planters....(3)

John Rowe's reception in Jamaica then did not auger well for the success of the mission; Baptist prestige on the island was far from encouraging any expansion of their work; to a large portion of the plantocracy Baptists were persona non grata, suspected of being revolutionary even to a greater degree than the Methodists. The situation was complicated for Rowe by the fact that the existing Baptist community was beginning to show signs of spiritual decadence, brought about by the compulsory denial of practical leadership, which encouraged the growth of syncretism in the form of African cult practices fused to Christian rites, the emphasis

1. see above, p.34

2. Periodical accounts 1815. 677-678

3. ibid.



falling on the African practices. But this was not the whole picture, there were still many who refused to forsake the simple orthodoxy as taught by Leile and Baker, though as might be expected, this group of faithful people had not developed very much. The first report stated that:

He (Rowe) also had some agreeable conversation with some of Mr. B's elders, who appear to be pious, sensible men, though nearly all unable to read. One of them expressed the desire to receive the Lord's Supper, which they have not enjoyed for ten years past. (1)

In Rowe's letter to Hoby (2) he described how the Native Baptists had been deprived of the means of grace, Baker had baptised no one for over three years, a general air of despondency pervaded, "in my own little circle here at Falmouth, prospects are not very promising; though not altogether discouraging. My congregations continue nearly as it has been for many weeks past. None has turned from the error of their ways". (3)

There were those, of course, who did not welcome the arrival of the British missionary, for having gained some authority within the Native Church they feared that they would lose it. Thomas Knibb illustrated the disfavour with which some of the Native pastors viewed the presence of the British missionary, relating how one black preacher, who had been in the island for many years, had prejudiced many of the older people against instruction by telling them that the word of God declared that the "letter killeth". Knibb stated that "no Roman priest could feel more incensed at seeing his people with a Bible than the person I refer to". (4)

Rowe soon realised that his task demanded a very high degree of diplomacy; the description of his approach to the work reveals that he possessed the necessary qualifications for such a delicate operation, even though he longed for much swifter action.

When I have resided here a sufficient time for my character to be fully known by the most respectable inhabitants, who are now in general on good terms with me, I propose to open freely my design in a direct manner to some of the most respectable planters around me, and to offer my services in this respect. I am more and more of the opinion that the open and allowed profanation of the Lord's Day is one of my chief obstacles...(5)

1. Periodical Accounts 1815, 505
2. see above p. 67
3. Baptist Magazine 1815, 168-169
4. ibid. 1823. 263
5. Periodical Accounts 1815 677-678 Clarke, Dendy, Phillippo, op.cit. 142

Not being adverse to sound advice, Rowe, on being refused a license to preach, opened a school at Falmouth and began to gather around him a group of followers, many of whom would be members of Baker's now scattered church; though he was officially forbidden to preach he was able to exercise an effective concern for the people. It was not long before Rowe announced his intention to open his house for the purpose of preaching; this he did, until the authorities feared that he was exercising too great an influence upon the people. Yet in spite of thier intervention he steadily impressed his character upon the local people to the extent that there was every indication he would be granted his licence; unfortunately, before that could take place he died suddenly of fever, on June 27th 1816.

John Rowe was, in every aspect, an optimist, it was part of his faith; notwithstanding setbacks to his work he could write "I feel confident that after a few years they will get better." The pioneer work had begun, and Rowe's life had become part of the foundations; he had shown the authorities that they could trust Baptists, but it was impossible that one man could remove the prejudice of years, which had hardened into hatred of all Dissenter and of Baptists in particular. Nevertheless, a start had been made. The British Baptists, who had for years been making spasmodic, though no unimportant, efforts concerning the whole question of Slavery, now had to face the problem of Slavery in terms of an actual confrontation, their missionaries could no longer see it as an academic question, they were dealing with actual slaves: how were they to react? The luxury of complete freedom to act as one's conscience dictated was to take some time to develop, but during the next twenty-seven years persecution and restrictions in Jamaica and political altercations in England slowly built up the pressure of frustration in Jamaica until the inevitable explosion took place, an explosion which involved slave, missionary, planter and British Government alike.

## 2. Difficulties and Progress 1814-1824

It has been suggested that the early Baptist missionaries encountered little by way of opposition or difficulty, until the arrival of William Knibb in 1825; Dr. Kilpatrick's impolite description of Knibb - "the lauded emancipator of Baptist literature" and "agitator" - implies that Knibb was the embodiment of the spirit of rebellion. It is even suggested that John Rowe gained permission to preach with apparent ease. True, Rowe encountered no direct physical opposition, but neither did he receive a license to preach. (1)

There was no uniform pattern of procedure for the granting of licenses, or any guaranteed method of obtaining the necessary document, each parish being at the mercy of the current mood of the presiding magistrate; generally speaking, most missionaries experienced some difficulties when applying for a license. In the case of John Rowe, death intervened before the authorities considered the possibility of granting him his license, and this after only two and a half years in the island.

The work accomplished by Rowe in so short a time encouraged the B.M.S. to send out Le Compere, another of Dr. Ryland's students, who, together with his wife and 'two pious artisans' from the Broadmead church, sailed from Bristol on November 21st 1815. (2) On arrival in Jamaica, Compere settled at Old Harbour, and seems to have met with little or no obstacles to his application for a licence. There is every indication that he was well received by the Native Church, not only at Old Harbour, but also in Kingston. The pastorless Negro congregation in Kingston lost no time in inviting Compere to be their minister; his acceptance of this invitation furnished the B.M.S. committee with an opportunity to re-iterate their non-involvement policy, for their letter implies that his activities while at Old Harbour included some political indiscretions:

the last accounts received encourage us to hope that Mr. Compere, who received a license from the Mayor of Kingston will be very useful among them. The charge given to Mr. Compere when he was sent out, to abstain most cautiously from all interference with political concerns, and to inculcate on all his hearers, and particularly on those who are

1. Kilpatrick, op.cit. 36-37. Unfortunately this work has a distinct bias against Baptists, Knibb in particular; what makes it unfortunate is that the Baptist source material used should be very limited.
2. Baptist Magazine 1815, 484. Le Compere: the original notes on this Christian Missionary. 1966. Halstead Baptist Church, Essex.

slaves, the conscientious discharge of all relative duties, and especially to remind them of the instruction given by the apostle, to those in such condition (Ephes. vi. 5-8. Col.iii, 22-25, I Peter ii. 18-25) have been earnestly recommended to his attention, since his removal to Kingston, and we trust that he is fully aware of their importance. (1)

This report reveals how anxious the Baptist Missionary Society committee was at this time, not to encourage any greater degree of hostility than there already existed in such a delicate situation: Rowe was by nature diplomatic, Le Compere however seems to have been of a more volatile nature, in the manner of his famous successor William Knibb. That the report is also a censure on his work is borne out by the fact that his sojourn in Jamaica was short, his early departure was generally accounted for on the grounds of ill health, but this hid very ominous undertones; the balance between the success or failure of the mission at this stage was delicately poised: Dr. Cox, the B.M.S. historian, is somewhat guarded when he writes of Compere that "The Committee were not entirely satisfied with his conduct, and not unwilling that his connection with the Society should terminate". )2) Added to this is the pertinent question of John Clarke who asked, "was Le Compere before his time in his hatred of slavery, and was this the real reason for his leaving the work of the B.M.S.?" (3) Compere's action, whatever it was, seems to have raised the vital question, could the Society afford to send men of this character into such a situation at this stage in the work?

A further point of interest in the report is its realism, the committee did not minimise the difficulties awaiting their agents, especially the problems implicit in the existence of an indigenous Native Baptist Church, holding no allegiance either to the British Baptists or the original Native church of Leile and Baker.

Compere's move to Kingston put him in touch not only with a very large community 'of several thousands', but also confronted him with many problems, for

they have been lead into various extravagances and mistakes; and

1. Baptist Magazine 1817. 74
2. Cox op.cit. 24-25
3. Clarke Memorials of the Jamaica Mission op.cit. 74. Dendy in his biographical note on Compere diplomatically makes no reference to the tension between Compere and the B.M.S. Clark, Dendy, Phillippo, op.cit. 46-47

have been split into parties, under the guidance of unskilfull and ignorant preachers, some of whom have made prey of them. But the most suitable remedy seems to be allowing them a faithful minister of their own denomination. (1)

hence the Committee's anxiety.

The work in Kingston developed steadily, a church and a school were established at East Queen Street, necessitating an appeal by Compere for additional help: by this time he was the sole B.M.S. representative on the island, Rowe having died. In anticipation, James Coultart, a Scot trained at Bristol, had already been appointed; it was providential that Coultart arrived in Kingston when he did for Compere, though his health was affected, had reached an impasse in his relations with the Society; wisely he resigned and left Jamaica to do a valuable work in America among the Cree Indians. (2)

The Society was fortunate indeed in their new missionary, not only did he prove to be one of a number of long serving missionaries, staying in Jamaica for some twenty years, he was also a pioneer of no mean order. In the relatively short space of two to three years he built up the church in Kingston to the point where it was essential that they possessed premises large enough to accommodate the expanding work. A suite of buildings were planned consisting of a chapel seating 2,000, a house for the minister as well as a school: the impecunious state of the B.M.S. dictated that the cost of such a project be borne by the local church, within two months the local church had raised the amazing sum of £1,000. (3) A break-down in health, aggravated by the sudden death of his wife in 1819, forced Coultart to return to England in order to recuperate, during which time he took advantage of personally appealing for money for his much needed buildings. In one such appeal written to a person in Watford, we are given an interesting glimpse of the work in Kingston during the first quarter of the nineteenth century:

Tho a perfect stranger to you I indulge a hope that you will pardon the liberty taken in sending you the enclosed statement. It is indeed a first outline of the more wretchedness and necessities of the long neglected and degraded population of the island to which it alludes.

1. Baptist Magazine 1817. p. 74

2. ibid. 1824, p.170

3. ibid. 1819, 410. 1836, 463. see also Buncker, S. The Free Coloured and their fight for Civil Rights in Jamaica 1800-1830. Lond. M.A. 1960 for reference to the Conveyance of the Chapel recorded in the Kingston Registry of Freehold. p.14

Heaven alone has described their true condition by the most merciful representations of fallen man.

We have in Kingston at present a small house in which the Negroes meet to worship God - But more than 1400 persons and those (too) professed members of the Baptist Church there cannot be accommodated it is too small. Every other place of worship in that city is crowded to excess, and the laws of that island prohibit us from meeting for praise singing reading expounding or preaching except in a licensed house - he can only meet on the Lord's Day between six in the morning & evening. These 1400 members are as totally deprived of the means of instruction tho exceedingly anxious to receive it as if there were no missionaries on the island - They are almost all slaves and consequently very poor tho very willing to do what they can for God (1)

The East Queen Street premises were opened with a flourish on January 27th 1822, causing no little stir in the town; no doubt adding some colour to the scene at a time when the economic position of sugar had plummeted to its lowest point, creating an air of gloom throughout the island. (2) It was something of a novelty for Baptists to build such elaborate buildings, but Coultart refrains from over confidence in his report of the official opening:

Our Chapel was opened last Lord's day, the 27th inst. and numerously and respectably attended. I made some remarks on the reports and such statements as have induced some unknown gentleman not only to vindicate but advocate our cause, and earnestly solicit the public to support an institution "so likely to be advantageous to the public welfare". You will praise God with us for the result so unexpected. The day of opening the chapel was advertised, and by nine in the morning, an hour and half before service, many hundreds of people were waiting for admission. When the doors were opened, the place would have been filled to excess at the first rush, had not persons been stationed so as to keep the galleries clear for strangers. Upwards of two thousand persons were numbered within, and we are moderate in saying that five hundred were without on benches. Much must be attributed to novelty; but we have reason to hope we shall be tolerably attended generally. If all our own members could attend, we should have no room for strangers; but two-thirds of them can attend at one time, and therefore we must depend upon occasional visits from others. (3)

This event inaugurated an era of expansion in Baptist work; by April of that year, Coultart baptised seventy-two people, and administered the Lord's Supper to "Sixteen hundred or upwards". Again in August 1823 he baptised one hundred and seventeen people, amongst whom he says "were nine of the most respectable persons of colour who have yet had to offer themselves to

1. Letter of Coultart May 19th 1819 in Regents Park College Oxford.
2. Patterson, O. The Sociology of Slavery p. 77-78 Lond. 1967
3. Baptist Magazine 1822, p.219

our communion. (1) We are fortunate in having an eye witness account of these rapid developments, especially as Baptists were accused of indiscriminate baptisms and offering membership without discipline. Thomas Knibb, sent out as a missionary-teacher, arrived in Jamaica in 1823 and stayed for a short while with the Coultarts: his first letters to Dr. Ryland give full accounts of these early days at East Queen Street, as well as offering a clear picture of how the Baptists conducted their affairs in Kingston:

I shall now proceed to give you an account of the second Sabbath I spent here, a day to be remembered with peculiar pleasure. Being ordinance day, and there being many candidates for baptism, this was the day fixed for administering the two ordinances. Baptism is administered at an early hour for several reasons: 1. That those who are servants may be back to their employers in time. 2. That the sun should not scorch us. 3. To prevent the assemblage of carriages &c &c. We set off between four and five for the sea side, there being too many for the baptistery in the chapel. Though it was so early vast numbers were assembled at the place of baptism, and many had slept all night under the trees to be there on time. Tents were erected for dressing, and enclosed with rails. A number of canoes filled with spectators, formed a semicircle, within which baptism was administered. Though the numbers were great, they behaved with the greatest decorum, and seemed impressed with the solemnity of the ordinance. The candidates were arranged in double columns:- the men on one side and the women on the other. The women had white dresses, and the men white trowsers and shirts. Mr. C. and I, and several of the members, leaders, deacons, &c. stood between the columns, and commenced by singing and praying. I then took two of the men into the water, to a sufficient depth, and after repeating the usual words, baptized them. The time the ordinance was administered was employed in singing, which lasted nearly an hour. Out of eighty females not one made the least disturbance, or discovered the least fear of the water. Nothing occurred to interrupt the solemnity of this important, this interesting ordinance. The number of persons baptized was one hundred and fifty two.....The greatest caution has been exercised in receiving these candidates. Many more have been rejected than have been received. Their knowledge, doubtless, is scanty, but many of their prayers testify that they are acquainted with the fundamental truths of the gospel. They have no inducements to hypocrisy, except if ridicule and persecution be inducements. Mr. C. is as faithful in addressing them as a man can possibly be; telling them that it will be of no use whatsoever to be baptized if they do not love and serve God: on the contrary, it would be far better for them if they were never baptized at all. (2)

The second letter provides information concerning the general organisation of the East Queen Street church, revealing something of the

1. Baptist Magazine 1823. p.131
2. ibid. pp. 218-219

importance of the 'class leader':

Our church is conducted somewhat on the Methodist plan. It is divided into classes, under their respective leaders. The classes meet several times a week, in different parts of the city, for reading, prayer, &c. Before a member is received into the church he must attend class as a follower, till such time as he shall be thought a fit subject for baptism. Sometimes they attend class for more than a year, or even two, before they are admitted, and many are not admitted at all. When a follower is proposed as a candidate for baptism, the leader must express his approbation of the measure, and make enquiries into his character in the circle in which he moves; a meeting is then appointed to hear his experience, at which the pastor and leaders preside. If the account given be satisfactory, he is admitted; if not, rejected. (1)

With the assistance of Thomas Knibb Coultart began developing the work at Port Royal, which was only a few miles away from Kingston, standing at the extremity of the seven and a half mile long strip of land known as the Palisadoes. (2) Though Knibb's first responsibility was to the school; he shared with the senior missionary the pastoral and evangelistic work of the church. He brought to those tasks considerable gifts of organisation and enthusiasm for the work. The school was a success and many applications for admission had to be refused owing to lack of accommodation: (3) this success was undoubtedly due to Knibb's love for his pupils as much as to his skill as a teacher; it was written of him that "his affection for his numerous little culprits was too strong to allow him to inflict any severe punishment upon their bodies. It was obvious that most, or all of the children, loved him greatly". (4) But before long death again robbed the Society of a valuable agent, for on April 25th 1824, he died. (5)

Meanwhile, the expansion of the mission continued; work at Anotta Bay commenced with the arrival of Mr. Philips on December 21st 1823. The Anotta Bay magistrates were presented with a new problem with the arrival of a Baptist Missionary for "he could not immediately obtain a license, as no precedent could be found for granting one in the annals of the parish". (6) However, by 1825 Philips had become an accepted part of the Annotta Bay community. (7)

1. Baptist Magazine, 1823, pp. 401-402

2. ibid. pp. 262-263

3. ibid., 1824. p. 43

4. ibid., p. 359. 1825, p.131

5. ibid., p. 359

6. ibid.

7. ibid., 1825 pp. 94-95



The work of the mission continued to expand in spite of financial restrictions; Coultart raised the money for the extension work from whatever source he could, as in the case of the work at Mount Charles: being persuaded that with the help of interested local people, a continuing work could be established there - Knibb tells of a congregation there of 1000 plantation slaves (1) - he purchased some vacant property in that area, though it was several years before a missionary could take charge of the station.

As the work progressed throughout the island, so the work in Kingston continued to grow: by 1828 it was recorded that the chapel was filled with 2000 people, and that there were 300 children attending the school (2) and by 1829 a Girls' school had been added to the work of East Queen Street. Coultart was by no means alone in the success that accompanied the work of the Baptist mission at this period, despite the general antagonism towards Dissenters. It is possible that the very fact of persecution made the work of the missionary that much easier; their identification with the slave was the more complete, and their message the more acceptable. The period between 1817-1834 witnessed a deplorable increase in the brutality adopted towards the slave population, which provided the missionary and the anti-slavery movement with a veritable armoury with which to attack the system. (3)

During this whole period, Jamaica saw the arrival of a number of British Baptist missionaries, several stayed long enough to make significant contributions to the work, others quickly succumbed to the climate and either died within a short while of arrival, or returned home broken in health. The following table indicates that between the arrival of John Rowe in 1814 and the arrival of Knibb in February 1825 the B.M.S. appointed 13 missionaries: out of the 13 men sent out during this period five of them died within three years of their arrival, added to this the wives of two of them, Mrs. Coultart and Mrs. Godden, had also died; three others left for personal reasons:

1. Hinton, op.cit. 46
2. Baptist Magazine 1828, 290
3. Patterson, opcit. p. 78-79

<u>Name</u>	<u>Date of Appointment</u>	<u>Date of Death/Resignation</u>
Rowe, J.	1813	Died 1816
Compere, L.	1815	Resigned 1817
Coultart, J.	1817	Died 1836
Godden, T.	1818	Returned 1823
Kitching, C.	1818	Died, 1819
Knibb, T.	1822	Died 1824
Tinson, J.	1822	Died 1850
Tripp, H.	1822	Returned 1823
Burchell, T.	1823	Died 1846
Phillippo, J.M.	1823	Died 1879
Fleming, J.	1823	Died 1825
Philips, E.	1823	Died 1826
Knibb, W.	1824	Died 1845

.... (1)

1818 saw the arrival of two men, Christopher Kitching and Thomas Godden. Godden, together with his wife, was designated to work at Spanish Town, while Kitching was to carry on the work of Coultart during his absence in England. Kitching's letter to Ryland gives the impression that he was not unlike Rowe in his cautious approach to the problem of gaining a licence; he first presented himself to the magistrates as a matter of courtesy, before making direct application, and he took the precautionary measure of becoming well acquainted with his own native leaders, "I have met with the class leaders of our denomination three times since my arrival" - this no doubt in case there were any awkward questions asked by the authorities. (2) One of the first tasks Christopher Kitching undertook was to survey the situation at Spanish Town, in preparation for the arrival of the Goddens. The Spanish Town Community, first established by Leile, was desperately in need of leadership; (3) thus there was a sense of relief when Thomas Godden and his wife arrived: tragedy, however, lurked round the corner, for Kitching wrote to inform the Committee on

1. Catherall, Jamaican Emancipation, op.cit. p. 26
2. Baptist Magazine, 1819 p.96
3. ibid. p. 410

October 25th 1819 of the sudden death of Mrs. Godden; this was to be his last report home, for he, too, died a fortnight later. (1)

Spanish Town, the once proud capital of Jamaica, about twelve miles from Kingston, (2) is described by Godden in his first letter home, giving us a glimpse of the difficulties which faced a missionary as he began work in a hostile atmosphere:

Brother Kitching and I went to Spanish Town on Monday 12th. We examined several houses, and chose one as a place of residence which is the cheapest, and for the present the most convenient in the town unoccupied. It was also strongly recommended by some pious friends living near the spot. It is situated near to the extremity of the west end of the place. The rent is £40 per annum. The outhouses are in a ruinous condition, which I am to repair, and deduct the cost from the rent. I have taken it for one quarter. It is my sincere desire and religious determination to put the Society to as little expense as possible; but I fear I must exclusively depend upon it for support during the whole of the succeeding twelve months at least. (3)

There is an interesting parallel in Maria Nugent's description of King's House, Spanish Town, in July 1801 when she writes "Our apartments are very spacious but very dirty" (4) with Phillippo's description of his first church building in 1824 which, he says, was "inconvenient and dirty". (5)

Within a year Godden was able to report that the church in Spanish Town was growing; though in July 1820 he had to report a case of arson, in which his house was burnt down - it proved to be the work of one man and not the efforts of the plantocracy. (6) Unfortunately, Godden's health was impaired, necessitating his return to England in 1823; he died, however, in 1825.

Already the Bristol Academy was deeply involved in the Jamaica mission, supplying the first three missionaries; once again the College was to send a student who was to make an important contribution to the work. By the time Joshua Tinson arrived in Jamaica in 1822, the growing Baptist work was beginning to fire the imagination of the denomination, and not least the students, as the following poem composed by a fellow student of Tinson's illustrates:

1. Baptist Magazine 1819, 410
2. The status of capital was transferred to Kingston in 1872
3. Baptist Magazine 1819, 410
4. Wrights, op.cit. 11
5. Underhill, E.B. Life of the Rev. James Mursell Phillippo. Lond. 1881, 36
6. Baptist Magazine 1920, pp. 526-527

Though oft Jamaica's sickly breath  
 has laid our envoys low,  
 And sealed their slumbers deep in death,  
 Yet do not fear to go,  
 The voice of pray'r  
 For thee shall rise,  
 To keep thee there,  
 Midst burning skies,  
 From death's destructive blow.

So when the hallowed graves appear,  
 Where Rowe and Kitchen lie:  
 There dash away the starting tear,  
 Nor heave one trembling sigh, -  
 But swear by Him  
 Who ever lives,  
 You'll give to Him  
 The life He gives,  
 Nor fear for Him to die.

Ye - go - the spirit's sword to wield;  
 Our pray'rs shall guard your way,  
 Till triumphs grace the bloodless field,  
 And captive souls obey.  
 Go - break their chains,  
 Spoil Satan's wiles,  
 Till Jesus reigns  
 O'er Western Isles,  
 And millions own His sway. (1)

Tinson's arrival in Montego Bay was uneventful, but when he reached his destination, Machioneal, he encountered frustration, for while he was received with friendship by the people, including the rector, the authorities refused to grant him a license. (2) This refusal caused him to return to Kingston and there accept an invitation to become the minister of a congregation of Negro Baptists who had been without the encouragement of leadership and instruction for some considerable time. It is most probable that this particular group was the remnant of the former Winward Road church, formed by Leile in 1793. (3) Tinson soon organised this community into a church of some consequence in Kingston, working in conjunction with the East Queen Street church; the British Baptists were now firmly established at the heart of the country.

1. Baptist Magazine 1822, 207. It is possible to detect the general attitude of the Bristol academy towards slavery in the last stanza.
2. Knight, R.A.L. edit. Liberty and Progress Kingston 1938, 3. Tinson was refused a license in 1822 "lest the parish should be inundated with sectarians."
3. Baptist Magazine 1823 p.130-131. Voice of Jubilee p.174. Sibley, Inez Knibb The Baptists of Jamaica 1793 to 1965 p.38 Kingston 1965

One of the 'pious artisans' who sailed out with Le Compere was Henry Tripp, who was invited to help the ageing Moses Baker on the estate at Flamstead; the invitation was accepted but Tripp stayed only a year.

Meanwhile, at the annual meeting of the Society held in London, July 1823, the work in Jamaica was being discussed by the Rev. Joseph Kinghorn and William Carus Wilson, M.P., both men highlighting important aspects of the situation in Jamaica. Kinghorn gave a solemn though hopeful account of the work when he said "more missionaries are wanted, but the funds have not allowed the Committee to send more. The prospect is now brighter. And where God opens such a door, we ought to go in". Wilson underlined British obligations towards the slave population in the West Indies; together they intimated the inevitable involvement with the slave population which was to play such a vital role in the ensuing years, as Jamaica experienced the final agonizing convulsions of slavery as a way of life. (1)

During the years 1823-1824 there occurred several events which had profound effects upon the island; events which produced immediate adverse reaction from the plantocracy who, in turn, reacted against slave and missionary alike: these events contributing to the final collapse of slavery in the British colonies.

By the Autumn of 1822 Wilberforce had finally persuaded Thomas Powell Buxton that he was his natural successor as leader in the fight for Abolition: the first important action following this union was the establishment of the Anti-Slavery Society, with its avowed aim of procuring the immediate improvement of the condition of the slave and the eventual complete emancipation of all slaves within the British Colonies. This in itself was offensive to the plantocracy, and their representatives in England, the West India Association, made their attitude unmistakably clear. Powell Buxton, having taken over the leadership of the Abolitionists in Parliament, presented on May 15th a statement in which he pledged to bring about complete abolition of the slaves, even if it was to be a 'gradual aboliton'. He ended his speech by saying:

that the state of Slavery is repugnant to the principles of the British constitution and of the Christian religion and that it

ought to be gradually abolished throughout the British colonies with as much expedition as may be found consistent with due regard to the well-being of the parties concerned. (1)

From this statement it can be seen that Buxton was certainly not as radical as some would have wished, he had not been able to rid himself completely of the idea that the Negro was a piece of property, as is evidenced by his concern to placate the planters: O. A. Sherrard appears to be justified in his severe criticism of Buxton that "when Buxton came down to details it was evident that he paid too much regard to the well-being of the planters, too little to that of the slaves". (2) Gradual abolition was not acceptable to all the abolitionists, and though as late as 1831 Buxton wrote to Joseph Sturge, the Birmingham Quaker, still advocating a gradual abolition, Sturge and others such as Cropper wanted an immediate emancipation.(3) On the same day, May 15th, the policy of amelioration was introduced by an order in council to all Crown Colonies with some measure of enforcement but, unfortunately, in such colonies as Jamaica where there was a much greater degree of autonomy through government by Assembly, such a policy was difficult to enforce: the Government could only hope that it had sufficient influence to exert some 'gentle persuasion'. But this was too much to ask for at this particular stage in the relationship between the British Government and the Jamaica Assembly. The West India Association in Britain were not opposed to the suggestion made in the Act of Amelioration and to prove their sincerity many of the planters and merchants aided in the rejuvenation of the Incorporated Society for the Conversion and Religious Instruction and Education of the Negro Slave in the British West India Islands which had been moribund for a considerable time; some of the prominent members even became members of the missionary bodies based in Jamaica. (4) This, however, was not welcomed by the plantocracy in Jamaica, the 30,000 whites of Jamaica stood "on their chartered rights of self-government as proudly as the planters of Virginia in 1776 declined to be overruled by the Colonial Office". (5) The offending resolution contained the following contentions:

1. Sherrard op.cit. 171      Coupland op.cit. 124
2. ibid
3. Richards, H. Memoirs of Joseph Sturge Lond. 1864. 98-104
4. Ragatz. op.cit. 420
5. Carrington, op.cit. 292

That it is expedient to adopt effectual and decisive measures for ameliorating the condition of the slave population in His Majesty's .....this House looks forward to a progressive improvement in the character of the slave population, such as may prepare them for a participation in those civil rights and privileges which are enjoyed by other classes of His Majesty's subjects.

That this House is anxious for the accomplishment of this purpose at the earliest period that shall be compatible with the well-being of the slaves themselves, with the safety of the colonies, and with a fair and equitable consideration of the interests of private property.

The Jamaica Assembly lost no time in protesting against what to them was sheer impertinence on the part of the British Government: on the 11th December they also passed a resolution in the Assembly strongly deprecating the action of the British Government:

That this House cannot contemplate without sensations of astonishment and the most serious apprehension, the measures which have been adopted by the Commons House of Parliament in their unanimous vote of the 15th May last; as if the machinations of a powerful and interested were not sufficiently active for the work of destruction, the sanction of ministerial authority has been made subservient to their views, and a decree has gone forth whereby the inhabitants of this once valuable colony (hitherto esteemed the brightest jewel in the British Crown) are destined to be offered a propitiatory sacrifice at the altar of fanaticism....That this House, impressed with a due sense of their own dignity, and the integrity of the colonial character, set at nought the malicious and unfounded aspersions which have been cast upon the inhabitants of Jamaica. Proud of their attachment to His Majesty, His family and Government, devoted to the interest of those they represent, and alive to the impulse of humanity, the House need no Pharisaical dictator to prompt them to the discharge of their duty, but will, left to their own guidance, steadily pursue the line of conduct which comports with the loyalty of their feelings, their regard to the safety, honour, and welfare of the island, and peace and happiness of their fellow-subjects and dependants. (1)

Whilst there was strong agitation in Britain for the amelioration of the slave, there were those who, though sympathetic, were afraid of the consequences; one such person was the Rev. R. Bicknell who, in 1825, published a pamphlet entitled The West Indies as they are or A Real Picture of Slavery. He argued that there was a case for amelioration but seemed afraid that this was but the beginning of a campaign for immediate emancipation which he opposed for the following reasons: 1) because the planters were entitled to remuneration by some means or other, but ii) the cost of this would be too high for the Government to contemplate and iii) it would be unfair to

the Negro himself to be burdened with freedom for he was unprepared through lack of education to cope. One interesting comment on the relationship between the Dissenters and the rector of Kingston is given by Bicknell, who stated that "the sectarians, indeed, completely take the lead in that city, and bury two, when the rector buries one; every funeral (by the Baptists, Wesleyans &c.) is really a guinea loss to him. (1)

The plantocracy began a vigorous resistance to the changed attitude of the British Government, which took the form of increased restrictions upon the remaining few privileges of the slaves, which also affected the activities of the missionaries. The new wave of persecutions was made to seem both moral and rational because of the incident which had taken place in Demerara in 1824, involving the Rev. John Smith of the London Missionary Society. Smith was said to have been implicated in a slave revolt in Demerara; being placed in prison under trying conditions, Smith, who suffered from tuberculosis, died; this caused the nonconformists and the abolitionists in Britain to become even more vocal than they had hitherto been, which caused even greater annoyance and anxiety to the plantocracy. (2) Meanwhile, in Jamaica itself they made their attitude towards the Dissenters, especially the Baptists, public by publishing in one of the island's newspapers their reasons for not granting James Mursell Phillippo his license:

At a court of quarter sessions, held in this town on Tuesday, an application was made by the Rev. James Phillippo, a Baptist missionary, for leave to preach in this parish, but the documents he produced, being without a known seal or signature, were considered unsatisfactory, and leave was refused. He was informed that, in the present perilous state of these colonies, it became the duty of the magistrates to be extremely cautious in granting such permissions; more especially as many of the sectaries in the mother country had declared their avowed intention of effecting our ruin, and had united in becoming publically and clamorously the justifiers of such a man as Smith, whose seditious practices in Demerara had been proved by the clearest evidence.....(3)

In spite of Joseph Kinghorn's lament that the B.M.S. could not afford to send out missionaries, 1823 was to be a significant year for Baptist work in Jamaica. Two of its most famous missionaries to Jamaica were commissioned to work in the island, Thomas Burchell and James Mursell Phillippo.

1. op.cit. Knowsley Papers. Cohen Library Liverpool University.
2. Coupland, op.cit. 127-128. Sherrard op.cit. 173-174
3. Augier and Gordon Sources op.cit. 152



During 1824 another interesting event took place, not unrelated to the arrival of the two missionaries. Though it did not have any real bearing on the movement for abolition, it did indicate the deep fear intensified by the Smith incident and the steady success of the Dissenting community in the island; both were seen as symptomatic of a vicious conspiracy to end the plantocratic system; it was the establishment of the first Anglican diocese of Jamaica. In the judgement of a modern Jamaican historian, W. Adolphe Roberts, it was undoubtedly in response to the missionary activities of Burchell and Phillippo and others, which threatened to capture the Negro en masse as soon as slavery should be abolished. (1)

1. Roberts, W.A. Six Great Jamaicans Kingston 1957, 52.

### 3. The Rebel Trio

In an essay entitled 'On the Tendency of Sects' Hazlitt writes of Dissenters:

There is one quality common to all Sectaries, and that is a principle of strong fidelity. They are the safest partisans, and the steadiest friends. Indeed, they are almost the only people who have any idea of an abstract attachment either to a cause or to individuals, from a sense of duty, independently of prosperous or adverse circumstances, and in spite of opposition. (1)

Hazlitt could well have been describing the three men, Knibb, Burchell and Phillippo, who played so important a role in the critical years of Jamaican history, 1824-1838. The attributes listed by the essayist were necessary in a missionary, especially if that missionary found himself confronted by active slavery as practised in the West Indies, for fear and suspicion of the white man was one of the first obstacles to be overcome in winning the Negro for the faith. The complete involvement of Knibb, Burchell and Phillippo with the slave population, and their utter disregard of their personal status and safety gained for them a position of unique opportunity which, in spite of obstacles, they exploited to the full. Their sense of commitment to the people was, in many respects, stronger than their commitment to the B.M.S. and was the outcome of their understanding of the gospel. They, along with the other Dissenting missionaries, emphasised the personal nature of religion. Encouraged by the doctrine of believer's baptism, they took the concept of commitment a stage further: baptism meant being made a new person, therefore the baptised Negro attained a new status; this, in turn, determined the attitude of the missionaries towards the Negro population, and well illustrated the subtle but important distinction between 'belonging to' and being 'identified with' described by Professor Douglas Webster when writing about the immediate task of the missionary in any new situation:

Evidently Paul starts with the assumption that as a missionary he must be accepted in any community which he would win. But to belong to a group means to subordinate oneself to it - this is the condition of acceptability. The crucial importance of belonging has not always been fully recognized by those concerned with

1. Hazlitt, W. The Round Table & Characters of Shakespeare's Plays  
Lond. 1951 Everyman edit. 51

the Christian mission. Although the first agents of mission will usually come from outside any community - though not invariably - they can be effective only as they work and witness from within. They cannot remain outsiders and achieve very much. The concept of 'belonging' is of much greater significance than that of 'identification'. (1)

There is, however, a tendency to forget that the positive work of the B.M.S. missionaries in Jamaica did not cease after the passing of the Act of Emancipation in 1834, in fact it could be argued that their finest contribution lay in the work of the reconstruction of a new society, which was accomplished after that date. The period immediately after 1834 was crucial for the future of Jamaica, and it is only against this background that their contribution can be truly assessed. It is significant that a 20th century West Indian revolutionary, Frantz Fanon, suggests that the lack of 'belonging' is a curse of 'decolonization', though he conveniently fails to mention those whose sense of 'belonging' have made a vital contribution to Negro history and whatever progress they have made when he writes:

All that the native has seen in his country is that they can freely arrest him, beat him, starve him: and no professor of ethics, no priest has ever come to be beaten in his place, nor to share bread with him.....But the thing he does not see, precisely because he is permeated by colonialism and all its ways of thinking, is that the settler, from the moment that the colonial context disappears, has no longer any interest in remaining or in coexisting. (2)

Important though the work of Knibb, Burchell and Phillippo was during the final months of official slavery within the British Colonies, we cannot ignore the fact that emancipation would have come in time without the whirlwind attack upon the system led by Knibb: nevertheless, to Knibb and his colleagues credit must be given that emancipation was not allowed to be shelved once again by the British Government.

Emancipation was for the Trio the beginning of a great constructive programme, which was, in the main, inaugurated by them; it is perhaps not too much to suggest that these three men made one of the greatest contributions to the foundation of modern Jamaica: Sir Alexander Bustamente wrote of Knibb in the 1948 Memorial publication "In truth and

1. Webster, D. Yes To Mission Lond. 1966. 53-56

2. Fanon, F. The Wretched of the Earth Lond. 1969. 34-35

in fact he laid the foundation for everything we attempt to do this day in our march towards the emergence of a Jamaican nation." (1) while another Jamaican historian wrote of him "he was a century ahead of Jamaica in his concept of freedom and his grasp of those conditions which make true freedom possible". (2)

Freedom, by its very nature, demands a continual struggle for survival; the British Government, the plantocracy, even the missionary societies failed to appreciate this fact: according to the Government the slave was officially free, the planters had been paid a large amount in compensation but continued to act as though the slave was not free, and once emancipation was achieved, the abolition society and many of the missionary societies seemed to grind to a halt, all sense of purpose had apparently been drained away as though they had now completed their task and were at a loss to know what next to do. The American scholar, Dr. Philip Curtin, well describes this post-emancipation phenomenon:

if the Jamaicans had shown little confidence in the slave society, they had none at all in the new regime of free labour. Nor had the humanitarians, originally the authors of the revolution, any ideas that could be borrowed. For them, emancipation was a moral duty. They had done their duty and now were finished. The only continuing interest was to prevent a relapse into slavery. (3)

This criticism could not be levelled at Knibb and his friends, for they saw emancipation as the beginning of the long and tedious movement towards nationhood; deliberately they set to work towards that end, fully aware that it would involve them in hostility and personal sacrifice. The fight for freedom was bitter and fierce, but for them there was no turning back, they were involved at the deepest level in that continuing struggle for freedom. The results of their total commitment to the work of complete freedom can be seen in such activities as their constant vigilance on behalf of the Negro during the Apprenticeship period; in the expansion of educational work, in working for labour and wage agreements as well as the establishment of the Free Village system. Within the framework of the transformation of the ex-slave into a free and responsible citizen lay the particular Baptist contribution to the growth

1. William Knibb Memorial Centenary Celebration. 1948
2. *ibid* H.P. Jacobs.
3. Curtin, *op.cit.* 103

and development of Jamaica from a slave society to the free and independent nation of the twentieth century.

Each member of the Trio brought his own contribution, marked out by his own personality: though Knibb is by far the most colourful and the most renowned of the three it has been suggested elsewhere that without Burchell his achievements would have been drastically curtailed. (1)

Thomas Burchell was born on 25th December 1799, at Tetbury in Gloucester, and could boast among his ancestors Sir Isaac Newton, while his paternal grandfather was the Baptist minister at Tetbury. It was while training to be a cloth manufacturer in Nailsworth, that he came under the influence of the Shortwood Baptist church, and from then onwards his thoughts turned towards the mission field. On November 25th 1819 he appeared before the B.M.S. Committee as a prospective candidate for work with the Society: it was at that interview that he met for the first time James Mursell Phillippo; five days after the interview Burchell entered the Bristol Academy to study under Dr. Ryland. It is interesting to note that both Burchell and Phillippo, who was then at the Academy in Horton, near to Bradford, were keen to learn as many subjects as possible in preparation for any contingency that might arise once on the mission field. William Burchell, Thomas's brother and biographer, gives some idea of the extra work entailed: as well as the usual subjects of Latin, Greek, Hebrew and mathematics there were also, this season, weekly lectures on anatomy and physiology by Mr. Chandler, designed principally for the benefit of missionary students, to whom some knowledge of these subjects is held to be of great importance. (2)

Apparently, Thomas Burchell was not averse to a little extra-curricular discipline, for we read that he also mastered the elements of chemistry, in his spare time!

On October 14th, in the newly erected church in the Courts, Trowbridge, Burchell was set apart for his new work as a missionary; three months later, in January 1824, he arrived at Montego Bay, and thus began a period of twenty-one years devoted service to the island. Not

1. The Baptist Quarterly Vol XXI No. 8. October 1966  
Catherall, G.A. 'Thomas Burchell, Gentle Rebel', 349-363
2. Burchell, W.F. Memoir of Thomas Burchell Lond. 1849, 34.

without good reason has Burchell been called the 'apostle of the West' for he founded and developed the following churches: Montego Bay, Mount Carey, Shortwood, Bethel Town, Gurney's Mount, Fullersfield, Savanna-la-Mar, Lucea, Salter's Hill, Falmouth, Rio Bueno and Stewart Town. (1)

James Mursell Phillippo was almost a year older than Burchell, being born at East Dereham, Norfolk, on October 14th 1798. It was his interest in geography that began his concern for the work of foreign missions, this interest was stimulated further by his joining the Baptist church and being introduced to missionary literature. Like Burchell, he had an insatiable appetite for knowledge; his spare time was spent in learning something about those disciplines he believed necessary to a missionary, such as medicine, brickmaking, house building, cabinet making, wheelwright's work, agriculture and the manufacture of articles of food and clothing: a truly liberal education, and one which he advocated and pioneered in the land of his adoption. (2) Together with the Rev. and Mrs. Philips, Phillippo and his wife arrived in Jamaica on December 21st, 1823.

Dr. Kilpatrick's somewhat derogatory remarks about William Knibb's arrival in Jamaica at least underline the fact that Knibb was not a person one could ignore. (3) Born in Kettering in 1803 - the town in which the B.M.S. was itself formed - Knibb, when old enough, joined his brother Thomas in Bristol, both being apprenticed to the printing trade. His master was Mr. J. G. Fuller, son of the Rev. Andrew Fuller, minister of the Kettering Church and also Secretary of the B.M.S. Mr. Fuller printed several issues of the Periodical Accounts in which they were introduced to the work of the B.M.S. in detail. This work resulted in the two brothers developing missionary concern, which in turn led them to offer to the Society for service. William's interest was considerably stimulated when his brother sailed to Jamaica. His own destination was eventually decided by a letter from Ryland to John Dyer, who had succeeded Fuller as the first full time secretary of the Society, and by the tragic death of his brother Thomas.

1. Knight Liberty and Progress op.cit. 4

2. Underhill Phillippo, op.cit. 8

3. see above, p. 84

Dyer had designs on William Knibb for work in Sumatra, but Ryland wrote:

I rather question his capacity for learning a new language. He is a good printer, and I conceive would have talents for preaching far from contemptible. But I think he would be more suitable for the West Indies than the East. (1)

Ryland could not possibly have known the effect his influence was to have on the work of the B.M.S. and on the future development of Jamaica.

Having married Mary Watkins, a member of the Broadmead church (2) William and his wife left for Jamaica on November 5th 1824, arriving at Port Morant on February 12th 1825. By the time Knibb arrived the Baptist mission was a rapidly growing community, its work was well represented over all the island, which was to necessitate in 1827 the establishment of the Jamaica Baptist Association, and later in 1829 two Unions within the Association: the Western Union and the Eastern Union. The existence of two Unions did from time to time cause some tensions, but during the persecution after 1832 the Association ceased to function until 1836; then in 1849 the Association gave way to the formation of the Jamaica Baptist Union. (3)

1. Hinton, J.H. Memoir of William Knibb Lond. 1847. 25
2. on Mary Watkins see Baptist Magazine 1866, 757-765
3. Knight, Liberty and Progress, op.cit. 10-11

1. Political and Economic Struggle

The period now under review contains all the necessary ingredients for revolt; it is little wonder that the years between 1824 and 1831 are marked by mounting tensions, only to be released in the revolt which broke out in the northern part of the island during the last days of 1831. One of the remarkable features about this period is the naive way in which planters, government officials and missionaries alike all expected trouble but were unable to recognize the signs of its imminence. The British Government was well aware of the explosive situation developing in Jamaica, but seemed unable to persuade the Jamaican authorities about its gravity. Indeed, the local attitude served only to aggravate the problems. This was clear when, in 1832, the British Parliament held an enquiry into the causes of the 1831-1832 insurrection; Viscount Goderich, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, in an appendix to the Report of the Committee of the House of Lords on Slavery stated:

After exhortations repeated by H.M. Government for more than eight successive years, without effect; after such public meetings as I have mentioned in every part of the island; after the circulation of the resolutions and public journals already noted; after a convention of a body of delegates at the capital and after secret debates in the House of Assembly, followed by the rejection of the measure proposed there for the benefit of the slaves, it must have become, to every reflecting man, sufficiently evident that the peace of the island was placed in extreme jeopardy, and that the slaves could scarcely escape the infection of these opinions, which they appear to have adopted. How fraught with danger to the public safety was the prevalence of such opinions among a people so ignorant, and easily excited, it was superfluous to remark. Induced as they had been supposed that the royal authority was opposed in their favour to that of their owners; and that designs were entertained by the King's government which the Colonial magistracy and proprietors intended to countenance by force; the sense of supposed injustice, combining with a plausible expectation of impunity in resisting it, could scarcely fail to urge them to acts of open rebellion. (1)

Early in 1831 the dangerous elements which were developing in the little island of Jamaica were causing some anxiety in England, for it appeared that those living in the island were so close to the situation that it was not recognised for the political danger it was. The Secretary



of State for the Colonies, Lord Goderich, sent a letter to the Governor, the Earl of Belmore, in which he made reference to a previous revolt which took place in the parish of Hanover in 1824, reminding the Governor that this small insurrection had been caused through letting the slaves believe that their freedom had been granted but was being withheld by the planters: could it be possible that this was happening again? The reply from the Governor reveals that either he was being very diplomatic or that he was, in fact, ignorant of the real state of affairs existing in the island; the latter is the most likely, for the rest of the island's responsible people seem to have been equally myopic. Reluctantly, the Governor admitted there were one or two small pockets of unrest, but he was somewhat over-confident about the power of his official presence as a sufficient deterrent to any would-be revolutionary, proposing a trip to the north side of the island he observed

My own opinion of the slave population is that, collectively they are sound and well disposed.....if I find that there is a necessity for tranquilizing the alarm of the white inhabitants, or for putting down any rising disposition to insubordination on the part of the slaves, I shall lose no time in issuing a mild but firm proclamation in His Majesty's name, according to the spirit and tenor of the document which accompanied your Lordship's despatch. (1)

It is difficult to assess Belmore's attitude, for on June 3rd 1831 a royal proclamation was forwarded to all Governors of Colonial protectorates denying that any order for the emancipation of slaves had been made; for some reason Earl Belmore did not publish this proclamation, even though it strongly emphasised the importance of obedience on the part of the slave to his master, as well as strict compliance with the laws of the land. One would hesitate to accept the judgement of W. J. Gardner when he says "Had he (Belmore) done so, one of the saddest pages in Jamaica's history would never have been written". (2) It was too late for any such proclamation to avert the pending disaster, the only proclamation that would have been effective was a declaration of complete freedom for the slaves, but this was the last thing the plantocracy wanted to happen.

Belmore's reply to the Colonial Office indicates how unprepared

1. Parliamentary Papers Vo. XVII. (285)
2. Gardner, op.cit. 272

the island was for the catastrophe soon to fall upon it; a contemporary writer described the state of the island as one of inertia:

The greatest part of the inhabitants of Jamaica had indeed been lulling themselves into a fancied and fatal security while, in fact, they were sleeping on a mine; and anyone who suspected the probability of an insurrection was looked upon as a timid alarmist (even after the preparatory notes of insubordination had been sounded)(1)

Had it not been that the slaves themselves were in no real position to revolt - as their only equipment was enthusiasm buttressed by anger (2) - the outcome could have been disastrous for the planting community in terms of bloodshed, not to mention property; as it was, the blood-letting was from the Negro and not the planter.

The attitude of the Jamaican Assembly towards the Home Government was one of defiance and suspicion; too long, so it seemed to the Assembly, the British Government had been whittling away their powers. Instead of protecting the interests of the plantocracy Parliament was listening to the powerful and persuasive voices of the new pressure group, the industrialists, who offered prosperity and a more secure future for Britain. Towards the end of the eighteenth century the very 'economic heart' of Jamaica, sugar, came under serious examination. By 1806 Roscoe of Liverpool, in a letter to Prince William indicated that the Traders of Liverpool were coming to the conclusion that the Slave Trade was no longer necessary and, given adequate remuneration, they were quite prepared to let it die peacefully. (3) As late as 1827 there were those who still argued for the continuance of Slavery on the grounds that it was beneficial and as 'the famous trade of the country' it could not possibly come to an end. (4) But the new industrial society demanded above all things cheaper food, and the West Indian sugar was anything but cheap: by 1829 it was so costly that many people in England could not afford to buy it. The West India monopoly was fast becoming an 'expensive anachronism'. (5)

This new and important group which seemed to be winning the affection

1. cited Patterson, op.cit. 277 from Foulks, T. Eighteen months in Jamaica 1833
2. compare ability of the Maroons to sustain a long aggression in 1795. see Black, op.cit. chapters VII, XIII
3. Mercer, W. Liverpool and the Slave Trade Manchester B.A. Dissertation 1966, 10.
4. Considerations on certain Remarks: Lord Stowell's Judgement in the case of the slave 'Grace'. By a Briton. Newcastle 1827
5. Parry and Sherlock, op.cit. 175-176

of the British Government, displacing the West Indian planter from the position of influence in Governmental circles, was that of the industrialists who, with notable exceptions, tended to secure the support of the Whigs with their traditional connection with trade and also, from the 1820s onwards, of the newer type of Commercial Tories, represented by Huskisson and Canning. They made no obeisance to tradition when it came to attacking landed interests as necessary for progress; they did so without any qualms for they were concerned with making money and thought it pointless to subsidize what appeared to be a decaying industry and if, as they argued with great force, slavery could no longer produce cheap sugar, then as an economic work force it was obsolete and should be abolished. (1) Naturally, the planters were worried by such arguments, even admitting to the soundness of its judgement, but refusing to accept its logic; one such planter, Andrew Colville, stated before the Commons Committee that:

Our difficulties arise from having to compete with sugar grown in Cuba and Brazil, where from the best information we can obtain, it appears that they can cultivate sugar at much less cost than can be done in our Colonies. (2)

As the eighteenth century came to a close it brought with it an air of economic gloom. The restrictions on trade with America had sent the cost of living in Jamaica rocketing up. To add to the difficulties, Britain later added to her colonies by securing Trinidad, St. Lucia, Demerara and Berbice, which added greatly to the supply of sugar which had the effect of bringing down the price; the result of the Napoleonic war was an economic depression in Britain, which tended to reduce the price offered for sugar even lower. The British market suffered from a glut of sugar which could not be sold, for the competition from France and her colonies was reaching its zenith about the same time. So critical did the situation become that Parliament authorized a loan of £500,000 in exchange bills for the merchants of Liverpool and Lancaster. Further competition from Cuba, Brazil and the East Indies exacerbated the problem and the planters of Jamaica became painfully aware of their

1. Black, op.cit. 144-145

2. Parliamentary Papers Vol. XX. 1831-1832. (721-722)

mistake in becoming virtually a monoculture: their limitations in trade became obvious. The further boycott of Caribbean produce by men such as James Cropper of Liverpool in the early part of the nineteenth century also added to the burden of a West India market unable to sell her goods. In Jamaica itself, partly through 'absentee landlords' resulting in bad management, together with the difficulties of obtaining capital for the plantations, many of the estates lay abandoned and many were working at great financial loss; no wonder then that the plantocracy suffered from depression and anger that the British Government no longer seemed interested in them, though they sanguinely hoped that they would be restored to their former glory which they believed was their right. (1)

It soon became obvious to the plantocracy that the British Government tacitly accepted the thesis that Jamaica was a decaying market; it was all too apparent that the new industrial elite would take over from the landed society and sooner or later would exercise political power; (2) this shift in the balance of power was an important factor in the advent of a Reformed Parliament in 1832, as well as stimulating further tensions already building up in Jamaica.

Little wonder then that this awareness of the political and economic tension in the relationship between Britain and Jamaica should produce a certain air of defiance on the part of the Jamaican Assembly, which displayed itself in ignoring any suggestion made by the Government in London making the slightest reference to the relationship between the planter and his slave. Any comment or suggestion for Britain on this matter was regarded as sheer impertinence and an unwarranted interference in what was to them a purely domestic matter. As long as Jamaica remained semi-autonomous, ruled by Assembly, she was determined to act as though she was completely independent; the Assemblymen had exercised their quasi-sovereignty with good effect before, and would do so again. During the eighteenth century the Assembly had developed the art of getting its own way. A wealthy and influential group such as that which made up the Jamaican aristocracy was a formidable group to control, let

1. Ragatz, op.cit. 288-289, 434. Augier, Hall, Reckord and Gordon, op.cit. 118-133. Augier and Gordon Sources op.cit. 31-88
2. Augier, Hall, Reckord and Gordon, op.cit. 154-156

alone influence. With strong representation at home in England guarding its interests, the West Indian plantocracy constantly challenged the authority of the Crown. The pattern of government in Jamaica was such that it was most difficult for any government overseas to enforce its will, or any Governor to implement his order;"the power to govern lay with the Assembly and the responsibility to govern lay with the Governor". (1) It does not require much effort to see how difficulties could, and did, arise, the Assembly had a stranglehold on the Government through the simple exercise of their power over the island's finances by which means they refused to vote money for policies presented by the Government which they did not approve. (2) The Assembly's real power lay in obstruction, at the art of which they became masters as has already been described in relation to the 1822 Amerlioration Acts. They acted on the assumption that they were de jure the government of Jamaica; this conflict of authority led to a substantial number of the planters wanting to ally themselves with the United States of America, the advantages of separation from England was discussed both in public as well as privately and was to appear at repeated intervals. R. Montgomery Martin, discussing the reasons for the part played in the organisation of the 1832 insurrection by Sam Sharp the Baptist deacon, says

He was not, of course, sufficiently well versed in the condition of foreign powers to understand the utter folly of the grandiloquent language held by the planters, but he could not mistake its seditious tendency, or misunderstand the open threats of a West India confederacy and union with the United States - which measure he well knew could have but the one end and aim of defeating the humane intentions of Great Britain. (3)

It is generally recognised that much of the problems on the estates stemmed from the remarkable phenomenon called 'absenteeism'; in the words of Dr. Orlando Patterson "we may describe the white Jamaican community as an absentee society". (4) Many of the plantation owners saw little, if anything at all, of their property, for they lived off whatever profits were made in the comparative safety and comfort of England. M. G. Lewis, one of the more sympathetic planters, wrote:

1. Parry and Sherlock, op.cit. 209-210
2. *ibid*
3. Martin, op.cit. 40-41
4. Patterson, op.cit. 33

There are no states more oppressively and cruelly managed than those of many liberal, humane and even religious proprietors residing in England. (1)

It is interesting to read that, as early as 1789-1791, in the evidence given before the whole House dealing with the Slave Trade, a comparison was made between the estates in America and those in Jamaica:

Planters in America resided almost entirely on their estates; but from what he (George Baillie) could observe, considerable Jamaica planters mostly lived in England. It appeared to him, that the slaves of a resident proprietor had a chance of better treatment. (2)

The general decline of the estates and the marked worsening of the attitude of the white master towards the Negro slave were direct results of absenteeism and, though the British through the efforts of Granville Sharp, had declared against the principle that one human being could own another human being, the acceptance of this new human concept seemed limited within the confine of the British Isles for, as W. L. Burn wrote:

In Britain a slave was regarded as one of His Majesty's subjects who happened to be labouring under peculiar disadvantages but was not on that account beyond the law of man or the mercy of God. In Jamaica he was looked upon as being different, not only in status but in kind, from his fellows that most of the benefits accorded him could only reach him through one channel, his master's authority. (3)

There was, however, another serious repercussion from absenteeism which was to affect the well being of the island itself, especially its capacity to face the future with any positive plan or purpose; Dr. Curtin has described this matter succinctly:

Much of the cultural and the intellectual poverty, and some of the economic decline of Jamaica in the nineteenth century can be laid at the door of absenteeism....more important, absenteeism tended to drain off those with leisure and money to spend on public affairs, and men who had education and interest in the arts and letters, and who in the last analysis had to make the decisions that would have improved the outmoded agricultural methods of

1. cited in Olivier, S. Jamaica: Blessed Island Lond. 1936. 57-59
2. Slave Trade Evidence - Abridgement of the Minutes of the Evidence Taken Before the Committee of the Whole House. Vol. 1, 1789-1791. 76 for a recent contribution to many of the matters touched on in this section see Patterson op.cit.
3. Burn, W.L. Emancipation and Apprenticeship in the British West Indies Lond. 1937. 59

sugar economy. (1)

This lack of leadership was to have grave consequences for Jamaica, a case could be made out to show that much of the economic and social ills stem from the lack of strong positive leadership; a problem which dogged the island well into the post emancipation period, in fact until she became a Crown Colony in 1865. Devoid of leadership and any sympathetic understanding of the situation, the mass of the island's population, the Negro slaves, turned increasingly to the missionaries as the only section of society which had anything to say to their present condition and their ultimate future. Knibb, Burchell and Phillippo stand out as men who fully understood what was at stake and what, indeed, they were fighting for; they were fully aware of the weakness of the plantocracy and that its days were numbered; because they were so convinced of the rightness of their cause they were prepared to face the inevitable fury of the plantocracy. So much could have been avoided if only there had been responsible humane leadership, this deficiency was serious in its consequences as was the eventual collapse of the estate as a bulwark of British Trade.

Among the ever increasing list of pressures affecting Jamaica there were, of special significance, the acceptance of the Free Coloured community as a group with civil rights (2) and the formation of the Anti-Slavery Society.

The Free Coloured group was basically the result of the extremely permissive society which existed in Jamaica during this period: Phillippo was appalled at the situation even to the point of stating that "every estate on the island - every Negro hut - was a common brothel; every female a prostitute; and every man a libertine". (3) While this may well be an exaggeration, there is enough evidence to conclude that Phillippo, with his puritanical bias, was not too far from the truth. During one of the early dinner parties attended by Maria Nugent, she records that "the ladies told me strange stories of the influence of

1. Curtin, op.cit. 15, on the problems faced by an absentee landlord at the beginning of the 19th century.
2. for a thorough study of this particular group, see Sheila Duncker, op.cit
3. Phillippo, J.M. Jamaica past and Present State Lond. 1842. 218. This was a problem not unknown in Britain at that period, see Dr. Fernando Henriches' Modern Sexuality Lond. 1968

the black and yellow women, and Mrs. Bullock called them serpents". (1)

The Free Coloured group, who up until 1828 was in a most invidious position - the offspring of the relationships made between white estate workers with the coloured or Negro women - was dependent entirely upon the good will of the father, whether or not the child was accepted as a paternal responsibility. Many were given their freedom, but were never regarded as citizens and, as it has been suggested, the free coloured "partook, if not of the sins of the fathers at least the misfortunes of their mother...." (2) The slow process towards full citizenship was painful; first in 1796 a free coloured could give evidence in court, but only in his own defence; even this was conditional on his ability to produce a baptismal certificate. Then in 1813 they were granted permission to give evidence on behalf of others, but again they had to produce the magical baptismal certificate: not until 1828 were all civil disabilities removed, save the power to vote which was not granted until 1830.

By no means were all the free coloureds supporters of the Anti-Slavery Movement, in fact, not a few of them became slave-owners themselves; Miss Duncker records the rise to wealth and importance of one Daniel Saa, who owned property worth £2000 and "40 valuable negroes". Neither were all eager to join forces with the missionaries in their fight for better conditions for the slaves. Daniel Saa, himself a practising Anglican, appeared before the 1828 Committee set up by the Assembly to enquiry into the activities of Dissenters; he was called for the specific reason that he was anti-dissent. Of this there can be no doubt, for his evidence as it stands is quite damaging to the reputation of the Dissenters. (3) The Baptist missionary Joshua Tinson seemed most distressed when, in a letter to John Dyer, the Secretary of the B.M.S. he wrote "meetings are being called through the island, by Coloured as well as white slave holders, to oppose the government in attempting the abolishment of slavery." (4)

1. Wright Nugent Journal op.cit. 12. Race Coultard, G.R. 'The Coloured woman in Caribbean Poetry' Vol. II No. 2 1961, for a discussion of the place of the coloured woman in West Indian history.
2. Duncker, op.cit. 20
3. See below p. 122
4. The Baptist Quarterly Vol. XVIII No. 5, Jan. 1960, 226. Payne, E.A. 'John Griffiths: A Missionary Recruit of 1831'



Nevertheless, from out of this group there came an appreciable number whose influence was of immense importance in the preparation of the island for revolt. One of the leading figures at this time was Edward Jordan, who was early apprenticed to a tailor in Kingston; this soon gave way to his real love, journalism and politics. At the tender age of twenty he found himself involved in political intrigue, having joined a society dedicated to help promote throughout the island the works of the Anti-Slavery Society in England: in spite of his youth he found himself chosen as the secretary of this civil rights society in the very heart of Jamaica. Eventually he launched out with the support of others, and established a newspaper, The Watchman - at last there was a newspaper sympathetic to the slaves, as well as being useful as a medium for the Dissenters to propagate their own more radical ideas. (1)

The advent of the Anti-Slavery Society in England in 1823, together with the steady flow of literature denouncing the existence of slavery, served only to anger the planters, producing savage reprisals, which were directed at the slave and the missionary, for the Dissenters were seen as the official agents of the Abolition Movement, and success within the Dissenting Missions was taken to be an attack on the plantocratic system and an encouragement to the work of the Abolitionists.

Finally, in order to comprehend the situation fully, the plantocratic institution itself needs to be considered. One reason for the planters' refusal to accept responsibility for the situation, and the ferocity with which they carried out the reprisals, lies in the fact that the plantocracy which had hitherto functioned as the ruling oligarchy in Jamaica was now threatened both at home and abroad by those to whom it had previously looked for support; the resultant sense of insecurity developed what can only be described as a 'siege mentality'. This mentality, in turn, bred oppression as the one method of survival, therefore the plantocratic reaction to the situation was virtually predictable.

The planters themselves did more than any other group to bring the island into a state of revolt. Knibb, in his evidence before the

1. Roberts, op.cit. 3-23

Select Committee, reported that estate officials on several of the estates were openly saying that freedom would be granted after the Christmas of 1831, and gave as his reason for the immediate insurrection:

Some of the overseers told them that they would be free after Christmas.....the delegate's meetings were one cause, the knowledge which slaves had of what is passing in England was another; but the chief cause was the idea that the planters were going to transfer them to America, in consequence of the free papers having come from England. (1)

The carelessness of the planters is seen in their underestimation of the fact that many of the domestic slaves, such as Sam Sharp, could read, and the English newspapers left lying around their houses supplied them with information concerning the events in England, especially the agitation over the slave question itself. Though much of what they read would be misunderstood, nevertheless it was a talking point and the source of information for the Negro community, adding fuel to the smouldering fire which lay close to the surface: Sam Sharp is reported to have said, when asked why he and others organised such a revolt, "I know we are free, I have read it in the English papers." (2)

When the final confrontation of planters and Negroes came the planters were ready to place the responsibility for the tragedy on everyone save themselves. They refused to see in their general attitude and behaviour towards the Negro one of the important factors which brought to the fore the latent potential for rebellion, always beneath the surface of a slave society; its release on this occasion brought the day of freedom one step nearer.

1. Parliamentary Papers Vol. XX, 243-244

2. Facts & Documents connected with the late Insurrection in Jamaica etc.  
Lond. 1832. 10-12

## 2. Persecution and Expansion

British politics at this period were being influenced not inconsiderably by the continuing debate on the slave question: Wilberforce, ably supported by his protege Fowell Buxton, led the activities of the newly formed Abolition Society, and Slavery once more proved to be politically explosive; the politician, the economist and the Christian moralist each contributed to the final downfall of slavery in the British Colonies.

1823 witnessed a change in the attitude of the British Government with its policy of Amelioration, this was a tentative step in the direction of emancipation, and a tacit acknowledgement of the fact that the Negro slave was a human being: its intentions, if carried out, would undoubtedly have taken a good deal of the rancour out of the situation. The new attitude was tantamount to a social revolution as far as the Negro himself was concerned: the planters were being asked to consider the following recommendations - to abolish Sunday markets; to admit slave evidence in the courts; abolish taxes on all manumissions, and prevent the separation of families, together with the sanctioning of marriage. To regulate punishments, and to encourage thrift by the establishment of savings banks. (1)

Typically, the Jamaican Assembly reacted by ignoring the Government proposals; ten years later Richard Barrett, Speaker of the House of Assembly, addressing a meeting of West India planters indicated why the planting community would have no part in the politics of Amelioration:

It is not surprising that they hesitated to obey, without reflection, these imperative commands of the Colonial Office. The order was sudden and unexpected; it was conveyed in an unusual mandatory tone. Time was required for consideration, and to prepare their constituents for this novel mode of government... And it must not be forgotten that the Colonial Legislatures are freely chosen by the people; that purity of election has always existed in the West-India island; and consequently, that the representatives of the people dare not outrun or disregard the opinions of their electors. (2)

1. Augier and Gordon Sources op.cit. 183
2. ibid.

It is interesting that Barrett, making this statement in 1833, was still not prepared to admit the humanity of the Negro, for the people to whom he referred, and for whom he was so concerned, was the white plantocracy.

When, in 1831, the Abolitionists in the House of Commons helped to bring about a "revised and stiffened order in council" to enforce the 1823 Amelioration policy with some life and meaning, the planters reacted with increased severity, this in spite of the fact that the Government had offered to reduce the duty on the sugar trade on condition of their acceptance of the proposals. (1)

#### (a) Persecution

The agitation in Britain over the question of slavery, which had produced the policy of Amelioration, produced also in Jamaica a resurgence of persecution which was emotionally charged, carefully planned, and designed to subdue both Negro and Dissenting missionary alike. The persecution developed along two distinctive lines (i) general legal restrictions affecting both Negro and Dissenting missionary and (ii) particular attacks, physically and legally against the Negro slave and the Dissenting missionary.

##### (i) General legal restrictions, affecting both Negro and Dissenting Missionary

The Established churches on the island, namely the Anglican and the Presbyterian, were not affected by the legal restrictions imposed by the Assembly, as reprisals for the Government's policy of Amelioration. Both communions were pro-planter in sympathy, and as such were accepted as an extension of the plantocratic system: the chief targets of the restrictive laws were the Baptists and the Methodists, who were regarded by the Assembly as an extension of the Abolition Society. (2) Thomas Burchell believed that Baptists were subjected to the anger of the planters more than the Methodists, and indicated that they also suffered from hatred and jealousy fostered by certain missionaries. One such missionary prepared for publication in the Montego Bay Gazette an account of the unfortunate incident in Munster, during the sixteenth century,

1. Coupland, op.cit. 135

2. Phillippo Autobiography Mss. B.M.S. archives.

an incident involving one of the groups known as Anabaptists. It was prepared for the simple purpose of discrediting Burchell and his church. (1)

Attempts to restrict the work of Dissenters by the refusal to grant licences had been in operation almost from the moment of their arrival on the island, and had caused no little inconvenience to many a Dissenting chapel, hindering the work of Leile and Baker in particular. The inevitable outcome of such a policy as that adopted by the Assembly was the Consolidated Slave Law of 1827, which was a re-enactment of the restrictive laws passed in Kingston in 1807, designed to stamp out Dissenting influence. (2) This new law went much further than the 1807 Kingston act; whereas the local act restricted the actual people involved in teaching and preaching, the new law affected also those who listened, by restricting the times when they could worship and even made it illegal for them to contribute to the maintenance of their churches. This law was also now enforceable throughout the island and not restricted to Kingston, therefore it had a wide reaching effect. (3)

Phillippo and Burchell soon fell foul of the new restrictions, Phillippo was charged with conducting worship outside the permitted times, whereas Burchell was accused of accepting collections; the reaction of the authorities in Montego Bay indicates the purpose which lay behind the restrictions - a member of the Assembly, a Mr. Grigdon, stated:

Sir, your missionaries are a body of persons who we (the legislature) do not acknowledge. You have intruded yourselves on the island, unsolicited and unwelcomed. So long as you proceed on your own resources you are licensed on the principle of toleration; but we have passed this law, that you may not raise an income here for carrying on your purposes, and to prevent your further increase amongst us. (4)

Such direct and calculated attacks on the Dissenting community in Jamaica was inevitably to draw strong protests from Britain: it may well

1. Burchell, op.cit. 77-78

2. See above, 70-71

3. Baptist Magazine 1827, 244. Hinton, op.cit. 86-89. Burchell, op.cit.109  
Underhill Phillippo op.cit. 64-71

4. Burchell, op.cit. 118-121

be that the planters had misread the situation in Britain and had failed to recognise that, firmly embedded in the turmoil raging on the British scene, was the strong claim for religious toleration, it was a focal point in the general struggle for liberty; 1828 was the year in which the Test and Corporation Acts were repealed, and Dissent in England was beginning to be freed from the many restrictions which hitherto had shackled it. (1)

One of the effects of the Evangelical Revival which came with the Wesleys in the eighteenth century was the establishment of moral standards which were at variance with the general tenor of that century, especially concerning human relationships. This found expression in the crusade against the Slave Trade, as Kenneth S. Latourette observed:

It is highly significant that fresh religious awakenings with their renewed emphasis upon the putting into practise the ideals of the New Testament usually gave rise to attempts to free the slaves. (2)

The anti-slavery crusade helped to provide a new political weapon, the "weapon of organized moral indignation". This gave the new 'political class' an importance in the nation's affairs hitherto unknown, and their presence was a not inconsiderable influence in the political growth of the period. (3) It is clear that during the 1820s opportunities were provided for many people to enter into the political arena, via the anti-slavery crusade, who would otherwise have never been able to through fear of imprisonment, as in the case of the unionists: Peterloo was still a dreadful nightmare. The industrial class were struggling to express themselves and the class struggle was clearly under way. Following hard in the wake of the new experience of the opportunity to express themselves, and the discovery of the ability to do so, the workers of Britain began such agitation as Parliamentary reforms, and later clamoured for the 'Peaple's Charter'.

It was also a period of reforms. In 1819 Sir James Mackintosh and Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton laid the foundation for a major revision of the criminal law. It was also an age when the search for 'human

1. Payne, E.A. Free Church Tradition op.cit. 94

2. cited in Orr, J.E. The Light of the Nations Lond. 1965, 67.

3. Kitson Clark, op.cit. 37-38

happiness' was understood to be part of 'enlightened and liberal principles'. Minority groups all over the country were meeting to discuss rational and constitutional freedom and where they were not specifically indigenous enjoyed a large measure of Dissenting support. More generally, there was a growing familiarity with the works of Jeremy Bentham, and his theories of utilitarianism; sometimes these two movements, evangelical-dissenting and utilitarian-rationalist moved in parallel - sometimes they joined forces in the common concern to promote the 'March of Intellect'. (1) These and many other factors were misunderstood by the Jamaican plantocracy: they could not understand the sense of sympathy for the slave which was increasing in Britain, especially amongst the Dissenters, whilst on the other hand the activities of the plantocracy against the Dissenters in Jamaica roused even the most reticent to some kind of protest. The Baptist Missionary Society was also forced to forego their pietistic reluctance to interfere in the Jamaican situation, lest they be accused of being involved in the political implications of the slavery question, as on a previous occasion when, in 1804, Abraham Booth and others involved the Baptists on behalf of the Native Baptist Church. The Society's Committee, however, could argue that their main concern was that of repression of religious rights and, therefore, not political - though this ignores the fact that religious intolerance is often motivated by political forces. A strong protest was made to the Colonial Office, and Mr. Huskisson sent a letter deprecating the action of the Assembly, refusing to give British sanction to the proposed laws, thus officially invalidating the laws which were operating with some force on the island. (2)

It is possible to pass over without remark the invidious distinction which is made, not only between protestant dissenters and Roman Catholics, but even between protestant dissenters and Jews. I have, indeed, no reason to suppose that the Jewish teachers have many any converts to their religion among the slaves, and probably, therefore, the distinction in their favour is merely nominal; still it is a preference which, in principle, ought not to be given by the legislature of a Christian country.....I cannot too distinctly impress upon you, that it is the settled purpose of his Majesty's

1. Briggs, op.cit. 207-225

2. Hinton, op.cit. 88 Baptist Magazine 1828, 94-95

government to sanction no colonial law which needlessly infringes on the religious liberty of any class of his Majesty's subjects; and you will understand that you are not to assent to any bill imposing any restraint of that nature, unless a clause be inserted for suspending its operation until his Majesty's pleasure shall be known. (1)

This rebuff from the Government did not deter the anti-dissenting majority in the Assembly, persistently they brought the law before the Assembly; in fact, it was presented three times before it was finally accepted with a reduced majority - though even in this form it was not acceptable to the Home Government.

The news of Huskisson's letter and its contents set off a series of violent meetings in Kingston, the planters took exception to Secretary Huskisson's remarks concerning religious toleration, for they argued that they were providing safeguards against "the spurious tenets of the sectarians", claiming to be the guardians and custodians of the religious life of the island. The Dissenters reacted against the Assembly's attempts to drive them out by two open letters published in the Jamaica Courant, one written by the Methodist missionaries, Barry and Kerr, and the other signed by nine of the Baptist missionaries, Coultart, Tinson, Phillippo, Burchell, Knibb, Flood, Mann, Baylis and Burton. They strongly resisted the idea presented by the Assembly that "the restrictions contained in our Slave Law, with respect to Dissenters, are indispensable". The final paragraph of the Baptist letter, written on November 30th 1827, boldly stated:

We are decidedly of opinion that the restrictions in the new Slave Law, respecting dissenters, are not 'indispensable', that they are not calculated to promote the welfare of the colony, and that they are strongly opposed to the equitable and peaceable doctrines of Christianity, to the liberties of good and loyal subjects, and to the rights of Christians.

We therefore feel ourselves under increased obligations to his Majesty's ministers, for disallowing the restrictions respecting dissenters, contained in that law. (2)

The missionaries were now known to be in opposition, and had ventured into the realms of politics, not by choice, but through the sheer force of the events themselves.

1. *ibid*

2. Baptist Magazine 1828, 95.



The tempers of the plantocracy were fast reaching breaking point; it was humiliating enough that the Home Government had supported the Dissenters in the island, but this apparent support had given the missionaries a false sense of security and they were openly venturing into the politics of the island. A Select Committee was set up by the Assembly to enquire into the activities of the missionaries, the underlying motive was to discredit the Dissenting community in the eyes of the British Government: they even went to such lengths as to set abroad rumours that the dissenters encouraged their women members to become prostitutes in order to raise money for their churches. (1)

The project failed and served only to cause much inconvenience to those missionaries who were called for questioning, (2) and a certain amount of odium from the slanderous remarks made by some of the witnesses. Reference has already been made to Daniel Saa, the free coloured person, who appeared before the Committee to give evidence on behalf of the planters; Saa who, by virtue of his own ability, had risen to a position of wealth and authority in Kingston. His evidence would appear on first reading damaging for the missionaries, but it needs to be borne in mind that his wealth and position could only be maintained as long as he accepted the mores of the plantocratic society:

Have you observed generally that those who are in the habit of attending those chapels, have become more industrious, less disposed to theft, or more valuable to their owners, or otherwise? He answered, I have known several to take their allowance, go to chapel at 4 o'clock in the morning, and contribute, and then send word that they were sick, and could not go to their work, when I was obliged to give them food, as they had spent all their allowance. I really believe they get more from the slave than from the free people. The poor free people have nothing to give but the negro has always something to give out of his allowance. If the free man gives his means, he has nothing to depend on if sick, but the slave knows he must be supported by his owner. I used formerly to get more labour out of 5 slaves than I now get out of 15. (3)

Dr. Orlando Patterson, in his The Sociology of Slavery, has well given the lie to this kind of accusation that the missionaries caused the slaves to work more slowly, the 'work to rule' was part of the

1. Reports of the General Baptist Missionary Society 1821-1845. Appendix to Report 1829.
2. Hinton, op.cit. 92-95. Burchell, op.cit. 125-126
3. cited in Buncker, op.cit. 97-100

Negro's natural defence mechanism, and had nothing whatsoever to do with the missionary Societies. (1)

The report of the Committee, as expected, was directed against the missionaries, depicting them as avaricious and scheming against the welfare of the island. It was published in the Jamaican Courant and Public Advertizer on December 24th, 1828:

Mr. Speaker,

Your Committee appointed to enquire into the establishment and proceedings of the Sectarians in this island, Report,

That they have taken the examinations of sundry persons, which examinations are hereto annexed, and find that the principle object of the Sectaries in this island, is to extort money from their congregations by every possible pretext, to obtain which, recourse has been had to the most indecent expedients. That in order to further this object and to gain an ascendancy over the Negro mind, they inculcate the doctrines of equality and the rights of man - they preach and teach sedition, even from the pulpit, and by misrepresentation and falsehood endeavour to cast odium upon all the public authorities of this island, not even excepting the Representative of Majesty itself.

That the consequences have been abject poverty, loss of comfort, and discontent among the slaves frequenting the chapels, and deterioration of property to the owners.

Your Committee therefore feel themselves bound to report, That the interference of the Missionaries, between master and the slave, is dangerous and incompatible with the political state of Society in this island, and recommend to the House to adopt the most positive and exemplary enactments to restrain them. (2)

The failure of this Committee to incite the British Government against the Dissenters produced the third attempt to get the Consolidated Slave Law through the Assembly, though, as Burchell pointed out in a letter to Dyer, there was some opposition to it within the Assembly. (3) The missionaries were determined not to abide by this law, and Knibb gave Dyer in London fair warning that he would not obey the law, if passed. (4)

These were desperate measures, intensifying the hatred and suspicion what had been implanted into the hearts of both black and white over many years, and it would take more than any act of law to eradicate them though that at least would be a tangible beginning.

1. Patterson, op.cit. chapter IX. 'Mechanism of Resistance to Slavery' 260-283. Also Comer, J.P. The Social Power of the Negro
2. Report of G.B.M.S. Appendix 1829. Gardner, op.cit. 355
3. Burchell, op.cit. 155
4. Hinton, op.cit. 97.

(ii) Particular attacks, physically and legally, against Negro slaves and Dissenting Missionaries

Against the background of systematic anti-dissent activities throughout the island, it was natural that certain groups and particular people should bear the brunt of these activities; the two obvious groups were the Negro slaves and the Baptist and Methodist missionaries.

Against the Negroes there was little need of subtlety, against the missionaries, however, there was a mixture of subtlety and unadulterated aggression. Amongst the first to suffer from the Machiavellian activities of the planters were the Methodists who, in 1824, seemed somewhat divided on the issue of slavery. The whole question had been raised over the Smith affair in Demerara; five of the island's Methodist missionaries published a resolution to the effect that "Christianity did not interfere with slavery". Naturally, such a statement gratified the planting community as the following letter from Mr. de la Beche of Spanish Town evidences:

There could have been no doubt of success at the approaching session had the very desirable resolution of the Wesleyan missionaries of Jamaica been printed and circulated among the authorities of the island, as I feel confident they would have removed the present prejudices against your missions, which have arisen from the intemperate proceedings relative to Smith's affair in England. (1)

One of the missionaries, Rev. Robert Young, preached a sermon on 19th September of that year in which he clearly illustrated the dilemma in which many of the Methodist missionaries found themselves. Though Wesley had been outspoken about the Slave Trade his strong Tory influence was still a dominant feature of the Movement, resulting in a compromise on the difficult subject of slavery that, while accepting slavery was wrong, the slave was to be content with his station in life for eventually he would receive his reward for the patience and endurance shown, in the life to come; this was the dominant theme of Young's sermon, based upon St. Paul's letter to Philemon vv.10-11.

If Christianity meddles not with the civil relations of master and slave, let me admonish you as bond-servants, against being dissatisfied with your condition, as this would be nothing less than murmuring against Him, 'who doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth.' It ought also

1. Parliamentary Papers Vol. XX. 1831-1832, opcit. 407.

to be remembered that the situation of life which Providence has placed you, is not without its comforts, for when you have performed your appointed work you are happily delivered from all anxiety and tormenting care, and the evening of each day can return to your humble cabin with the confidence, being assured that no creditor will be found there claiming the little property of which you may be possessed, no sick wife or sick child will be there without the aid of medicine, and if required, the assistance of a nurse, neither will your children meet you at your doors without looks expressive of starvation, and pierce your hearts with cries of hunger. No! Such scenes of misery are not found in your dwellings, for your bread is given you, and your waters are sure....(1)

This, of course, was too sanguine a picture, and did not take into account the fact that the master could, and often did, sell his slaves, break up that "happy family scene" described by Young, and enforce his slaves to work under conditions far from conducive to contentment.

Another missionary, Peter Duncan, gives further evidence of the extent of this compromise:

So far as it goes, I believe that Christianity is at issue with slavery; but while it is established by law, let religion get hold of the mind of the slave, and I believe that he will submit to slavery till he be constitutionally freed from it. (2)

This was the sentiment declared by the Presbyterian George Blyth who wrote "we are uniformly the friend of the slaves. We assist them to bear their chains..." (3) The strain of attempting to be loyal to the Negro and coloured people to whom they ministered and to the Wesleyan Society, from whom they received their directives, must have made the work increasingly difficult; so punctilious was John Barry in his attempt not to cause offence that he stated before the Common's Select Committee that he had "never entered a Negro hut". (4)

The 1824 resolution published by the five missionaries did not please the officials of the Wesleyan Missionary Society, who strongly disapproved on the grounds that it was interference in the political affairs of the island,<sup>(5)</sup> and thereby had compromised the Society even after it had expressly forbidden any correspondence between missionaries stationed in the island and the newly formed Abolition Society. (6)

1. Parliamentary Papers Vol. XX. 1831-1832, op.cit. 417

2. ibid, 107

3. Blyth, op.cit. 68

4. Parliamentary Papers Vol. XX op.cit. 79

5. ibid, 90-95

6. ibid. 154

It does not seem clear why the resolution should have been written at all, unless it was fear of reprisals on account of the Smith affair, though by no means did all the missionaries subscribe to the sentiments of the resolution and, four years later, two of their missionaries, Orton and Whitehouse, were among the first to be put in prison under the Consolidated Slave laws; (1) whilst William Knibb describes how all Dissenters were the object of scurrilous attacks made through the planter-owned press:

The public papers are filled with the most abominable falsehoods against us, and every means is employed to render us odious. We are called liars, pickpockets, vagabonds, scoundrels, and every name of reproach that malice can invent. Since his Majesty's government have declared that they will protect us, the devil has come down with great wrath. Two missionaries have been imprisoned in a loathsome jail, and how soon I may be in one I know not. (2)

The Methodists were by no means the only ones to suffer on account of the slave question; the Baptists had also to contend with the fact that slavery is a divisive factor, but their problem took a different form to that which had troubled the Methodist missionaries.

The trouble arose out of the question, whether a missionary was morally right to own or keep a slave. The Methodists had solved this particular problem in 1807, by not allowing any missionary to keep a slave or even to marry anyone who was a slaveholder. (3) The problem was brought to a head by William Knibb, during the years 1828-1829. Briefly, it would seem that a number of missionaries were purchasing slaves in order to set them free; Knibb was not objecting to this practice, as he himself was actively engaged in this work. His complaint was that the slaves were not immediately freed and were, in effect, only given a change of master with an option of freedom as soon as the slave could raise the price paid by the missionary. A case in question was that of Henry Tripp, who had purchased a slave with the sole purpose of granting him his freedom, but held him until all the money was repaid; such men, argued Knibb, were automatically registered as slaveholders, and this could only damage the cause they served. Knibb rightly asked

1. Baptist Magazine 1829, 85. Burchell, op.cit. 133

2. Hinton, op.cit. 89-90

3. Reckord, op.cit. 41

the question "what happens to the slave who cannot pay the required sum?" Even Dr. Ryland was not as clear-sighted as Knibb on this issue. (1) Phillippo, also, was amongst those whom Knibb suggested were in the category of slave holders. (2) Knibb's already tarnished image was not helped by this controversy, he was by no means popular with the B.M.S. Committee on account of his strong views on this question, and was classed among the 'officious meddlers'. His biographer, J. J. Hinton, points out that this irritation dragged on throughout the years 1830-1831; meanwhile in England garbled versions of the problem were being circulated, so that in 1831 Knibb wrote and asked Dyer to return all his correspondence on the issue that he might end the irksome affair. Typical of the man, Knibb ended his letter with a rather pointed attack on the evasive attitude of the Committee:

However, I have done; thankful that I am one of the 'officious meddlers', and not one of the honoured and applauded traffickers in human blood. Avarice ruined your mission at Serampore: God in his great mercy grant that slave-dealing missionaries may not ruin this in the West. (3)

Repercussions of the 1824 revolt in Demerara were felt by the Baptists also; Coultart reported that the church in Kingston had been closed down for several months, (4) and one of the early reports in the Baptist Magazine for 1825 ends with the words "Our Missionaries in Jamaica have peculiar reason to exclaim to their Christian friends in Britain, 'Brethren, pray for us'. (5)

Meanwhile, Phillippo was refused a licence to preach in Spanish Town, on the ground that "sections in the Mother Country have declared their avowed intention of effecting our ruin..." (6) together with the statement that his credentials did not have the seal of the Lord Mayor of London. It took him over a year to obtain the necessary document and then his license. (7)

James Mursell Phillippo does not seem to have attracted as much hostility as did either Knibb or Burchell, apart from one incident when he was forced to join the militia: his appeal to the Secretary of

1. Hinton, op.cit. 68-69

2. Underhill, Phillippo op.cit. 78ff

3. Hinton, op.cit. 68-72.

5. *ibid.* 95

4. Baptist Magazine 1825 275

6. See above p. 97

Underhill, Phillippo op.cit. 39

7. Baptist Magazine 1825, 94

Underhill, Phillippo op.cit. 40-41

State for exemption, on grounds of its incompatibility with his calling as a Christian minister, was upheld and became the general ruling for the island. (1)

Burchell's arrival in Jamaica in January 1824 was uneventful save for one disappointment. He had originally been directed to go to Flamstead, but on arrival he was told by Samuel Vaughan who, in 1814, had welcomed John Rowe, that he no longer needed a missionary on the estate and that the house usually set aside for the missionary was no longer available for it was now used as a hospital for the Negroes. The closing of Flamstead forced Burchell to go to Montego Bay, and it may well have been difficult for him to gain permission to preach had not Vaughan been acting as Chief Justice of the parish of St. James at that time. In fairness to Vaughan, it is possible that he was under pressure from his business acquaintances and friends owing to his interest in Baptist missionaries; previously he had warned Rowe that this might happen. (2)

In 1827, both Burchell and his colleague Mann found themselves faced with court proceedings. Burchell had, in the course of his correspondence with his brother William Fitzner Burchell, given detailed accounts of the intimidations practised by the planters on the Negroes attending worship. Whether it was with the consent of Thomas or not, William Burchell published the accounts in the New Baptist Miscellany and Particular Baptist Magazine. (3) The local plantocracy were informed and immediately took action. No lawyer could be found to defend the missionary, therefore he prepared his own defence. Whether it was a subtle move on his part, or just simple honesty, is a matter of opinion, but he showed his defence to a sympathetic planter who reported to his fellow planters that Burchell had amassed evidence of brutality, which they would find difficult to deny. This resulted in an attempt by the planters' council to get Burchell to make a public apology whereupon they would drop the case against him, which was tantamount to a confession of guilt. This was the last thing Burchell wanted, he was eager to

1. Baptist Magazine 1825, 94, 455 Underhill, Phillippo op.cit. 40-43
2. Burchell, op.cit. 51-53. See below p. 80
3. Baptist Magazine 1825, 481.

have a public platform for the evidence he had prepared; the planters sensed what Burchell was after and, therefore, dropped the charge, instructing their council to enter a 'nolle prosequi'. (1)

A more subtle attempt to silence Burchell was made by the local authorities, through taxation. An order was placed on his church, naturally Burchell refused to pay and, as a consequence, the authorities began to impound some of his property in lieu of payment. Items such as the lamps from the chapel building were taken: this angered Burchell as his letter to Dyer shows, it was a letter which must have disturbed Dyer, for Burchell declares that he will no longer remain quiet about the slave question:

Mr. Guthrie, collecting constable, has just called upon me, respecting the tax proposed to be levied on the chapel. I have, of course refused payment. He has intimated his desire not to seize until I hear from you in reply to mine of September 8th; hoping, I presume, that you will direct me to discharge the demand. But, my dear sir, do not allow yourself to fear difficulties; rather make every effort to defeat the design. Mr. Guthrie distinctly stated that, if the vestry succeed in this instance, the tax will almost probably be renewed every year, and be followed up in every other part of the island. As I before observed, the collecting constable is a gentlemanly kind of man, and will not proceed in a needlessly offensive manner against me: but then, seize he must. These attempts at oppression must not be concealed, however; but should be published from 'Dan to Beersheba'. They are not only very vexatious and annoying to us, but occasion much abuse. Still, they will be productive of good, if you will take advantage of them. I have some thoughts of coming home next year; and if I do, I'll tell a tale. Slavery! Accursed slavery! That infernal system! From my inmost soul I detest and abhor it! I am tired of living in its midst; though I sincerely love the work in which I am engaged. (2)

During this visit, Burchell had another painful task to perform: Knibb had already intimated the slanderous rumours being spread by the Colonial press; the press had, indeed, done its work well, for not only in Jamaica but also in England slanderous suggestions were being made, supported by some other missionaries - mainly the Presbyterians - that the Baptists were guilty of unchristian activities in the island. The Presbyterian missionary, George Blyth, was quoted in The West Indian Reporter, the journal of the West India Association, as saying he had

1. Burchell, op.cit. 127-129

2 ibid. 156.

Baptist Magazine 1831, 261-262.



"more than once endeavoured to conciliate the sectarian minister in my parish to a joint effort in the common cause of Christianity; but such union would interfere with their mercenary monopoly". (1) Questions were asked in England and Burchell had, of necessity, to defend his brethren in Jamaica. (2)

Without any doubt Knibb seems to have attracted to himself the bitterest attacks of the planters; it is possible that the reason for this animosity lay in the fact that he was the most outspoken on the question of slavery, his immoderate language and complete failure to accept the planter as being his superior, together with his known Abolitionist views. He was even suspect to many of the members of his own B.M.S. Committee who were, in the words of Dr. E. A. Payne, "prepared to disclaim responsibility for agents who involved them in political controversies." (3)

The first hint of this attitude towards Knibb is seen in his attempt to obtain a licence to preach in Kingston, when required to help Coultart at East Queen Street. On his arrival in Jamaica he had been accepted as a teacher, though he did some preaching at Port Royal. There is no mistaking the hesitancy on the part of Dyer to furnish him with the essential documents: Knibb tells us of the lame excuse the Secretary offered:

You are aware, my dear friend, that I came out unprovided with documents as a minister. But when I wrote to you on the subject, you replied 'that it was in consequence of my not having been instructed in an Academy'. (4)

And Tinson, who also wrote on Knibb's behalf, suggests that Dyer was being unrealistic in his argument, regarding Knibb's non-collegiate state:

I understand that you have been unwilling to supply these, when applied for subsequently to his arrival here, partly, if not wholly, on the ground of his not having received an academical education. Now, certainly education is much more valuable here than many of our friends in England imagine; but it is not so much classical attainment, as sterling piety, a proper missionary spirit, with a good school education, and the brains to make use of it. These Mr. K. possesses in no ordinary degree, and has shown himself hitherto a most active and indefatigable servant of the mission....nor can the

1. The West Indian Reporter No. XL. February 1831. 26

2. Baptist Magazine 1829, 448. 1831, 467-471

Burchell, op.cit. 162-170. We shall examine Burchell's comments when the matter is raised again in 1835.

3. Payne Freedom in Jamaica op.cit. 36

4. Hinton, op.cit. 62.

stations here, now Mr. Coultart is absent, do without his assistance. (1)

Not only was the matter of Knibb's not having been to college irrelevant, but the evidence would seem to suggest that it was nothing but a prevarication, since the Committee had been pleased to invite and accept Henry Tripp, one of the 'pious artisans', and there were many others to follow. Behind this hesitation there seems to lurk the fear that Knibb was another Le Compere. Knibb, it would seem, was incapable of hiding his true feelings; William Hankey, an absentee landlord, describing Knibb to the Commons Select Committee said that he was "a man of ardent feelings". (2) Whenever Knibb wrote or spoke on the question of slavery he did so with passion, as the following extracts show. On his journey out to Jamaica he recorded in his journal under the date 28th January, 1824:

Had a conversation with our fellow-passenger on slavery. His very attempts to justify it, evince it to be replete with every enormity. He has slaves, but never punishes any but females, as they cannot be brought into subjection without it. He is an odious picture of the brutalizing and immoral tendency of this execrable system, which calls loudly, I was going to say, for the curse of every friend of common decency. I pray God that I may never view with indifference a system of so infernal a nature. (3)

After a year working in a slave society he revealed the impression it had made upon him, in two letters, one to his mother and the other to his brother Edward. Knibb revealed how quickly he had penetrated to the heart of the slave question; like Robert Hall before him he saw that the very core of slavery was immoral, no amount of high sounding talk that the slave was better off than the hungry working class in England could eliminate its essential wrongness, such as the West India party were prone to do in their attempt to direct attention from the real issues; (4) yet Knibb's case that it was immoral and gave birth to immorality, degrading human nature to the level of the brute beast, was unshakeable.

The cursed blast of slavery has, like a pestilence, withered almost every moral bloom. I know not how any person can feel a union with such a monster, such a child of hell. For myself I feel a burning hatred against it, and look upon it as one of the most odious mon-

1. Hinton, op.cit., 61.

2. Parliamentary Papers Vol. XX, 311

3. Hinton, op.cit. 43.

4. West Indian Reporter op.cit. 19-21 See Broadsheet The Christian Remembrancer versus the Anti-Slavery Society in Dodington, Gloucestershire, home of the Corrington family.

sters that ever disgraced the earth. The slaves have temporal comforts in profusion, but their morals are sunk below the brute, and the iron hand of oppression daily endeavours to keep them in that ignorance to which it has reduced them....It is in the immorality of slavery that the evil chiefly consists. Leaving altogether the injustice of the thing out of the question, this feature of slavery is enough to make every Christian earnestly wish that it may be banished from the abodes of men. I can easily account for the persons becoming familiarized to slavery, and having a dislike to the slaves, as they are very trying; but it ought ever to be remembered that this proceeds from the system....

I do not thus write because I think that the slaves are not well off in temporal things - they have generally enough and to spare; but it is the state of their minds - here you have a barren waste, without anything to relieve the eye. And this moral degradation is urged as a reason why they should not be freed. Their oppressions have reduced them so low, that they can plead their oppression as reason why they should continue to oppress. (1)

The final act of this outrage in the eyes of the authorities came with the case of Sam Swiney. Swiney was a deacon at Savanna la Mar, during the period when Knibb was minister there. With other members, Swiney took part in a prayer meeting, at a time when Knibb was ill, someone informed the authorities that Swiney was illegally preaching. In spite of Knibb's protestations that there was a vast difference between praying and preaching, Swiney was sentenced to twenty lashes. Incensed by this, Knibb wrote an account of it for one of the island's papers, the Struggler, which brought threats upon his life. Meanwhile, Dyer in London was stirred to some action; forwarding Knibb's letter to the then Secretary of State for the Colonies, Sir George Murray, who in turn sent it to Lord Belmore, the Governor. This resulted in the dismissal of the offending magistrate (2) but the price of justice had to be paid: such action inflamed the Jamaican authorities and made Knibb a marked man, destined to be the target of plantocratic fury.

#### (b) Expansion.

Dissenting history in Jamaica during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries serves to illustrate a persistent phenomenon of Christian history: from the time of its inception up until the present time, the Christian Church has responded to persecution in a manner that is almost

1. Hinton, op.cit. 48-49

2. ibid, 95-96

unbelievable. As in the days of the Neronian persecutions of 65 A.D. and later during the Great Persecution led by Diocletian in 303 A.D. when the Church's faith was refined, becoming a dynamic force, battered but indestructable, so in Jamaica during this particular period, instead of exterminating the dissenting church the plantocracy succeeded only in helping to produce an expanding community whose convictions were woven into the very fabric of life through the sufferings of its people.

Next to James Coultart, Thomas Burchell was by far the most successful of the Baptist missionaries at this period. On July 17th, 1825, and again on August 4th he intimated to the B.M.S. Committee in London the desperate need of a new and enlarged building at Montego Bay; meticulously he detailed both the problems and the successes. His congregation continued to increase so that on July 17th 1825 he could write "today we knew not where to put them. Many went away for want of a place to stand". Masterly in piling up evidence, Burchell wrote again on the 28th August to say that the continued increase in attendance had placed the whole building in danger, and that it was now unsafe for public worship. The Committee replied that they were

Anxious to encourage the missionary here to the utmost of their power, the Committee have apprized Mr. B. of their willingness to deviate from their ordinary course, by appropriating a considerable sum, the amount of which has been specified, to the purpose he so powerfully urges; but, as that sum falls far short of what will be necessary, it is feared the object cannot be attained, unless some generous individuals shall be disposed to add to their customary benefactions to the Society, a specific donation towards it....(1)

Within a relatively short space of time the response to this appeal was amazing, the account given in the Baptist Magazine for 1827 showing that £1,145. 8s. 8d. was donated,(2)

Always an expansionist, Burchell wrote to the Rev. E. Clarke of Truro to tell him of the possibility of starting a new work at Falmouth, 22 miles east of Montego Bay. Falmouth at that time had a slave population of some 26,000 and offered a tremendous challenge and opportunity; as it turned out, Falmouth was to prove of immense importance in the struggle for freedom within a very short time. Meanwhile, the new church

1. Baptist Magazine 1825. 542
2. ibid. 1827. 44-46

at Montego Bay was only partly erected by April 1828, nevertheless, so rapid was the growth of the congregation that the original plans had to be altered to accommodate the numbers. (1) Furthermore, the work at two other stations, Crooked Springs and Falmouth, was growing apace, and Burchell also began two new stations, at Ridgland and Rio Bueno. (2) The increased pressure of work and the continued annoyance caused by the activities of the planters eventually took its toll of Burchell's strength, by the end of 1830 he gave serious consideration to the advisability of working the somewhat cooler climate of Gurney's Mount, some 16 miles away from Montego Bay, but instead he took a passage for England on the Nottingham, arriving in Liverpool on July 15th, 1831.

James Phillippo's main work at this time was his attempt to establish a sound education system in Spanish Town. This was in line with many of the moderates on the question of emancipation, they argued that education was a primary factor before freedom could be granted; one such spokesman, Henry Nelson Coleridge, visited the West Indies in 1825 and gave as his considered judgement that "it is not to emancipation but to education that the sincere philanthropist ought to direct his present labours". (3) Phillippo seemed to have created a fairly amicable relationship with some of the Spanish Town authorities, though not everyone was happy about the fact that his educational work included slave children. (4)

His educational programme was designed to accommodate all who would avail themselves of the courses offered, whether black, coloured, free or slave; among the first applicants were twenty Jewish children. (5) Previously to 1823 there were no more than one or two schools in the whole island expressly for the black population. (6) From 1825 Phillippo ran two schools, a Sabbath school and a weekday school; between the two establishments he gave instruction to 281 pupils. (7) It must have been with tongue in cheek that the writer of the article in The West Indian Reporter wrote "The Colonists have to perform the difficult task of educating a

1. Baptist Magazine 1828. 485
2. ibid. 1829. 88-89
3. Coleridge, H.N. Six Months in the West Indies in 1825. Lond. 1832, 48
4. Baptist Magazine 1828. 486
5. ibid 1825. 455
6. Phillippo, op.cit. 189
7. See below p. 220

large mass of people, in a state of slavery" (1) for this was one area of concern in which they did as little as possible.

In spite of his reasonably good standing in the town there were periods of petty annoyance which aggravated a concern for his health and necessitated his acceptance of an invitation to the United States during 1828-1829, and after a brief return to Spanish Town ill health again forced him to make the long journey to England. (2)

Soon after gaining his licence to preach Knibb was invited to be the minister at Savanna-la-Mar, a town situated South West of the island, and Ridgeland, some eight miles from Savanna-la-Mar itself. The work quickly expanded (3) and in spite of persecution he made plans for a new building, with the realisation that he would be responsible for raising the sum of £1,000 necessary. Knibb seems to have been notorious for buying up land and property without prior consultation; by 1830 he had bought land at Stewart Town, a house at Rio Bueno, as well as a debt to pay off in Falmouth on some property, altogether he was responsible for finding the sum of £2,180. (4) Later, in 1837, he wrote to Joseph Sturge saying that he was £2,500 in debt, but that "he could grapple with it"; (5) nevertheless, he seems to have been able to meet all the demands - though he must have caused John Dyer many a headache.

The death of Mr. Mann at Falmouth in 1830 resulted in Knibb being given a unanimous invitation to be minister there; during his fifteen years at Falmouth his social and political thinking became so developed that it was well in advance of its time.

Time and distance were no obstacle to Knibb, he had an insatiable appetite for work as the following letter to Dyer indicates:

The stations here are so numerous, and so far apart, that I know not how to supply my portion of them. Do, I beseech you, if you can, speedily send us help, or I fear you will hear that some of us are numbered with the dead. Only with a desire for help, I give you a statement of my weekly work; not, my dear sir, with any boasting, for I wish no other eye to see it but your own....Sabbath, three services, with the whole of the singing, &c. Tuesday, to Oxford or Cambridge, eight miles, Wednesday, to Rio Bueno or

1. The West Indian Reporter op.cit. 20-21

2. Underhill Phillippo op.cit. 90-97

3. Hinton, op.cit. 98

4. *ibid.* 100-107

5. Rawson Papers: Rylands Library Manchester. letter of Knibb to Sturge

Arcadia, fourteen miles. Thursday, back to Falmouth, fourteen miles, to preach in the evening. Saturday, to Stewart Town, eighteen miles, or some distant place, for the Sabbath. This every week, with hearing experiences, correcting disorders in the church, baptism, &c. is too much for one. Connected with the stations are more than 5000 persons; and I feel an awful responsibility. I long to establish a sabbath school, but I cannot; for now, from six in the morning till three in the afternoon I have scarcely a moment's rest. In addition to this I have to take my turn in Westmorland, which is eighty-six miles from the other extremity of my stations. (1)

In view of this expanding constituency it may be seen why the plantocracy were worried and argued that the Dissenters were gaining too much influence over the people. The steady progress of the Baptist work - that is, work connected with the B.M.S. and not taking into account the work of the Native Baptists - can be seen from the following statements. On August 23rd, 1827, Burchell sent the following account:

	<u>Increase</u>	<u>Total</u>
Kingston: Mr. Coultart's	120	3120
: Mr. Tinson's	56	490
Spanish Town	100	300
Old Harbour, branch of Spanish Town	72	115
Montego Bay	97	411
Crooked Spring	31	275
Annotto Bay	136	250
Port Royal	30	132
Mount Charles	77	111
Falmouth, 11 baptized and 30 dismissed to form a new church. 41		
Making a total increase of 730 by baptism, and the total number of members 5247 (2)		

While the report given in 1829 shows a marked increase in the total membership, the total being 7340, the following year the stations reported in full and showed that the work had expanded at a remarkable rate with thirty-nine churches and mission stations and the total membership reaching 9980, with a list of enquirers exceeding 11,423. (3)

During this period the work of the B.M.S. was strengthened by the arrival in 1827 of three missionaries of the General Baptist Missionary Society, who began work in St. Annes, Lucea and the Black River. Lucea was described by the missionary Mr. Hudson as "the first General Baptist

1. Hinton, op.cit. 103-104
2. New Baptist Miscellany op.cit. 482
3. Baptist Magazine, 1829, 397. 1831, 131.

Church in Jamaica"; (1) Hudson, together with Allsop at Black River and Bromely in St. Annes, were spared the difficulties over the question of licences but witnessed the persecution of many of their church members and were, themselves, closely scrutinized by the Sectarian Committee. One of the results of this Committee was to drain the meagre financial resources of this small Society as their report pointed out:

A considerable expense has also been incurred by an oppressive measure of the Jamaica Legislature, by which the Missionaries were summoned from distant parts of the island, and at great expense, to appear at Kingston; and had none of their expenses defrayed by the parties that required their attendance. (2)

Despite the struggle this small mission expanded, and by 1829 they could report a total membership of nearly 2,000 not counting adherents; nevertheless the work was short lived, ill health forced Hudson to return to England and the untimely death of Allsop, together with dwindling finances, compelled the G.B.M.S. Committee to withdraw from their work and hand over their work and property to the B.M.S., thus injecting into the mainstream of B.M.S. work a not inconsiderable addition. (3)

The avid readers of missionary literature in England found much to excite them in the reports coming in from Jamaica, it was almost as if they were specially written; missionaries being oppressed yet overcoming and their work expanding beyond the wildest hopes. However, to the planters these reports were portents of disaster; it was in reality an indication that their grip on the Negro situation was fast weakening - though it could be argued that their hold had never been more than tenuous. The expansion of Dissenting churches accelerated the political and economic breakdown in the island, spelt the end of the slave society as a viable form of social structure, despite the planters' tenacious resistance to this situation.

James P. Comer, writing of the American Negro's struggle for social power, describing the relationship of the planter with his slave, says that "The slave could love or hate or have ambivalent feelings about the relationship, but it was the most important relationship of his life". 4

1. G.B.M.S. Report 1828
2. *ibid* 1829
3. *ibid* 1830
4. Comer, J.P. *op.cit.*



The dissenting missionaries in Jamaica at least gave the Negro an alternative focal point and, whilst the missionary did not have the power of life and death in the material sense, as did the planter, nevertheless, he did provide hope and engendered not a little defiance and encouraged the struggle for independency and the emergence of the Negro's personality which, as we shall see, was an important ingredient in the Negro revolt of 1832.

Section A. Insurrection and Partial Victory 1831-1834

1. Insurrection

According to John Clarke in his biography of Richard Merrick, the first coloured Jamaican to become an accredited B.M.S. missionary, "the grand cause of the insurrection was slavery with all its concomitant evils". (1) Clarke rightly discerned that the system itself was the progenitor of revolution; the most docile of people have a limit to the amount of oppression they can take, beyond which necessity gives birth to revolt, and such revolutions are an attempt to make freedom a prerequisite for life.

By the middle of 1831 there was every indication that the slave population in the North of the island had reached saturation point. The Government continued in their suicidal course ignoring the ominous signs of discontent. (2) The plantocracy aggravated the situation by openly debating the abolitionist statements emanating out of England, and boasted that they would obstruct the process of abolition by every means possible. (3)

Early in July of that year Knibb wrote to Dyer expressing his anxiety over the growing tensions between the Negro and the Planter. The Negro, convinced that by Christmas he would be free, (4) became increasingly restive as he anticipated his freedom, while the planters, for their part, became more vociferous and punitive. Knibb himself grew more impatient that the official B.M.S. policy still remained aloof from the inevitable political issues confronting the missionaries, whereas he and many of his missionary colleagues were painfully aware that there comes a point when the refusal to acknowledge political responsibilities and the demands for involvement places the missionary in an intolerable position; thus he wrote one of his many impatient letters:

Such is the state of feeling here at present with respect to the extinction of slavery, that I should be almost afraid to go to

1. Clarke, J. Memoir of Richard Merrick Lond. 1850, 29. Baptist Magazine 1838, 85-86; 1839, 450; 1850, 117-204, 261-270
2. see above, 105-115
3. Hinton, op.cit. 112. Facts and Documents connected with the late Insurrection in Jamaica and the Violation of Civil and Religious Liberty
4. Hinton, op.cit. 113. Parliamentary Papers Vol. XX. 243

to any estate. I never knew anything like it, and in what it will end the Divine Being only knows. The slaves believe that they are soon to be free, and are anxiously waiting till King William sends them their free paper. Oppression and cruelty still go on. One of the inquirers here was this day threatened with flogging and imprisonment for not standing in the market all Lord's day selling her master's goods. I went to the Custos, and prevented it, telling him plainly that I would send word to the Colonial Office if the woman was punished. I should like your advice how to act. Numbers of our members are debarred the means of grace, by being obliged to buy and sell on the Lord's day for their owners. I have told them not to obey their owners in this respect, as it is contrary to the laws of God, and to those of the land. How would you act? Let me know. We really need instructions on these points, and on subjects connected with slavery; for, while you are exerting all your energies at home, ought we to sit all the day idle? (1)

Knibb was raising the question concerning the influence - or lack of it - of the Church in making some positive contribution on the question of slavery in real situations other than considering the question simply in terms of an academic exercise; he almost comes to the same conclusion as that suggested by Professor Stanley Elkin in his book Slavery, where he says of the American scene that

the church had little enough power and influence among its own white constituencies, to say nothing of the suspicion its ministers aroused at every proposal to enlarge the church's work among the blacks. (2)

But Knibb was not defeated, he believed that the Church had to work through the political structure, giving to it some moral content; liberty to worship as one believed was not only the political right and privilege of every man, but also a theological axiom.

October was a significant month, not only was Knibb asked by several Negroes if it were true "that free papers was (sic) come", but also a secret meeting was held on a Plantation named Retrieve. Led by one of Burchell's deacons, Sam Sharp, the meeting was organised to arrange a 'Passive Resistance' demonstration to begin immediately after the Christmas holidays. (3)

Sam Sharp, described by W. J. Gardner as a "sort of Chaplain to

1. Hinton, op.cit. 113-114
2. Elkin Stanley M. Slavery New York 1963. 50-51
3. Hinton, op.cit. 115. Facts and Documents op.cit. There is an interesting modern parallel to this concept of Passive Resistance Movement in Martin Luther King's The Trumpet of Conscience Lond. 1967. 63-78

the rebel forces", (1) was by nature a peaceable man deeply concerned for the welfare of his fellow slaves; his sole purpose in taking part in the preparations was to persuade the planters by means of a concerted slave action to enforce and create better working conditions, and to establish a system of adequate remuneration for work done by the slaves. (2) As a literate domestic slave, Sharp had ample opportunity to read all the newspapers, both English and local, lying around his master's home, as well as being in a position to overhear the frequent conversations and discussions on the vexed question of the changing attitude of the British Government towards Colonial Slavery. The question was no longer simply a matter for Parliamentary debate, it had become a national issue.

Sharp, unfortunately, along with many of his fellow slaves, wrongly assumed - not without some encouragement from the plantocracy - that freedom had been granted. It would seem that by this period Sharp had reached certain theological conclusions concerning the place and meaning of man in the order of creation, "referring to Holy Scripture as his authority" Sharp "denied that the white man had any more right to hold the black in bondage than the blacks had any right to enslave the white". (3) He had, in fact, reached a point central to Baptist theology, namely, the importance of the individual. He confessed at his execution:

I have sinned against the laws of my country, and by those laws I ought to die; but I cannot see that I have sinned against my God. All I wished was to be free; all I wished was to enjoy that liberty which I find in the Bible is the birthright of every man. (4)

It is, therefore, not improbably that his misreading of the actual situation was, in part, due to his strong conviction of what 'ought' to be. Concerning the truth for which Sharp died, H. Wheeler Robinson contended that "the passion of Baptists for liberty is one of the most strongly marked characteristics, flowing directly from the spiritual individualism which is their primary emphasis". (5)

1. Gardner, op.cit. 363-364

2. Clarke Merrick op.cit. 30

3. Bleby, op.cit. 111

4. Defence of the Baptist Missionaries. A Discussion between the Rev. William Knibb and Mr. P. Borthwick at the Assembly Rooms Bath. Lond. 1832,

5. Robinson, Wheeler H. The Life and Faith of the Baptists Lond. 1946, 123

Bleby who interviewed Sharp before his execution was impressed by the sincerity and intelligence of the man, (1) but it is obvious that Sharp was not alive to the explosive nature of the material by which he hoped to establish a measure of human dignity for his fellow slaves. It was Gardner's considered judgement that

Sharp was a mistaken man; he might have greatly injured the cause of freedom, but with all his errors, there seems little room to question that he was one of the best men who suffered at this time. (2)

Sharp's own account of a further meeting at Retrieve, two weeks before Christmas, shows that he was not alone in this work, but it also indicates that the movement had attracted a militant group who were prepared to kill in order to achieve their objective; in spite of his eirenic intent, Sharp was too deeply involved to be able to abandon the movement. (3) At this second meeting, an oath was taken which gave the whole proceedings a sense of finality, and even a sense of divine destiny: (4) through this experience Sharp discovered something of what Knibb consciously or unconsciously accepted as axiomatic, that there comes a point when religion and politics merge into one action, sometimes the one being more predominant than the other, as in the case of the 1832 insurrection where the political seemed to overshadow the religious idealism of Sharp. (5)

Thomas Burchell, Sharp's minister, was at that time still in England, and though unaware of what was happening was, in fact, deeply implicated for Dr. Reckord metaphorically suggests that "the only millenarian element in the Jamaican rebellion was the tendency of the slaves to turn the Baptist missionary, Burchell, into a Messianic figure, whose arrival was expected to herald freedom". (6) Bleby stated that this conviction was widely and openly discussed among the Negroes and had been for "several months". (7)

Meanwhile, the plans drawn up at Retrieve were not allowed to be put into operation as prepared. The event which seems to have precip-

1. Bleby, op.cit. 127

2. Gardner, op.cit. 364

3. Hinton, op.cit. 116

4. Madden, R.R. A Twelve Month's Residence in the West Indies Vol. II Lond. 1835, 44.

5. Past and Present No. 40. July 1968, 123. Reckord, M. 'The Jamaican Slave Rebellion of 1831'.

6. Reckord, op.cit. 326

7. Bleby, op.cit. 2-3

itated the tragic happenings of the next two months and, in fact, helped to change the character of the original idea from that of a non-violent demonstration for better conditions into a full scale revolt, demanding complete freedom, was an act of brutality perpetrated by a military officer named Grignon.

At Salt Springs on 24th December Grignon, a Colonel in the West Indian Regiment, ordered a husband to flog his wife, for reasons unknown, naked and in public. Not surprisingly, the husband refused; this act of 'insubordination' was intensified by the refusal of the slaves standing by to perform the flogging. Grignon rode off to report the incident and to arrange for some sort of reprisals to take place. When, however, this incident was reported to the Select Committee of the Commons, it was described as "an act of insolence" without any reference to the proposed flogging of the unfortunate Negress. (1) It is noticeable that the brutality of the planters towards the Negroes intensified during the periods of increased tension between the Jamaican Assembly and the British Government as, for example, after the Act of Amelioration in 1823; the period now under review was certainly one of great tension and led to the period of intense cruelty during the Apprenticeship period 1834-1838. (2)

Already the planters in and around Falmouth had sensed a feeling of unrest and sought to prevent any intensification of this by preventing the slaves attending worship on Christmas morning, accomplished by the simple, but effective, method of refusing to pay the slaves their special Christmas allowance unless they collected it that morning from the estate. (3) But Christmas was the one bright spot in the otherwise drab life of the Jamaican slave. According to the evidence of an estate manager, William Taylor of St. Andrews, there were only twenty-six Saturdays in the year on which the slave was legally entitled to be free from work and, in addition, three days of Christmas. Apart from Sundays, the slaves of Virginia had only three to four other holidays in the entire year - three days at Christmas and perhaps one day at the Harvest.

1. Parliamentary Papers XVII 1831-1832. Clarke Merrick op.cit. 30  
Clarke Memorials op.cit. 102
2. See below p. 185 - 201
3. Knibb Falmouth, op.cit. Mathieson British Slavery, op.cit. 211

In contrast, the Cuban slave had twenty-three days' holiday other than Sundays, and many of them occasion for excessive feasting and drinking. (1) In some parts of Jamaica the slaves were more fortunate and were given a holiday at Easter as well as Christmas. (2) Released from the burdens of the Plantation for three days, with time to relax and allow the natural African exuberance and ability for gaiety to express itself, it also acted as an important social and political safety valve. Maria Nugent gives a vivid account of the Christmas festivities of 1801, "Christmas Day! All night heard the music of the tom-toms, etc. Rise early, and the whole town and house have the appearance of a masquerade". The Governor's lady, in her entry for the 28th December, reveals that she was not unaware of the importance of the festivities as a safeguard of their peaceful co-existence:

The Christmas sports recommenced, and we don't like to drive out or employ our servants in any way, for fear of interfering with their amusements. Poor things, we would not deprive them of an atom of their short-lived and baby-like pleasure....(3)

The missionaries of the General Baptist Missionary Society, however, did not see the Christmas festivities in quite the same light as Maria Nugent, as their report for 1828 shows:

Christmas is a long holiday season in Jamaica. With the Negroes it is one of the principal seasons of relaxation in the year; and O in what a heathenish manner do these poor creatures celebrate that important event....The two days following Christmas they come down from the estates in sets, and parade about the town with the harsh and discordant sounds of the rudest music; dancing and playing all kinds of antic tricks until the evening; when a part of them will return home, and the other part will stay until they have made themselves worse than brutes by drinking their beloved rum. This, you will be aware, is a season of great trial to those who are, or are about to become the followers of Christ. But I am happy to say that brother Hudson's people conducted themselves in a becoming manner all the holdiay. (4)

In contrast to this normal air of gaiety, the diary of the little Moravian Community at Spring Vale, in the Parish of St. Elizabeth, shows clearly how effective the unrest of Christmas 1831 was. Dated December

1. Klien, op.cit. 180

2. Parliamentary Papers Vol XX. 1831-1832, 8

3. Wright Journal op.cit. 48-49

4. General Baptist Missionary Society Report 1828

26th the entry reads:

We again had a full church, but the people did not seem to be so attentive as yesterday; there were many among them who had not been at service on the previous day. The children again gave us no pleasure, they were so listless and wandering in their thoughts. In the classes the people were exhorted to remember the subject matter of this festival, to take it home with them for further consideration.....It was a matter of surprise to us, that there was no noise of drumming and dancing at YS as usual in other years and which we had anticipated would distract our devotions.....(1)

As Christmas Day drew near so the sense of unrest was intensified. On December 24th, the day of the Grignon affair, Knibb was informed by Stephen James of Chatham that the slaves were saying "Free papers was come out and they would not work after Christmas". (2) Meanwhile, news from the districts was filtering through to some of the missionaries. Bleby wrote that on 26th he met a certain Mr. Murray at a little place between Savvanna-la-Mar and Montego Bay, called Ramble, and was told

that there was reason for the apprehension, for some of our members had heard people belonging to the Baptist Society declare their intention to 'sit down' and not return to work, after the Holiday. (3)

George Blyth suggested to Knibb that he was the person to try to persuade the Negroes to abandon any idea of strike action. Together with two deacons Knibb visited a number of estates trying to stress that 'free papers' had not been sent out; all to no avail, for the Negroes were suspicious, even accusing Knibb of betraying them. (4) It was too late, the Grignon affair had set light to the tinder and the flames were beginning to take hold. Up to this point it would seem that Bleby spoke for all the missionaries when he wrote:

Christmas Day arrived and with it increased rumours of insurrection and strife and bloodshed; for which, however, no satisfactory reason could be given, and some of which had their origin only in fears which possessed the public mind. For my part, I had no expectation of any disturbance, beyond the revelling and feasting which was common among the slaves during the Christmas holidays, and was disposed to smile and the apprehension which seemed to be so generally entertained. (5)

After the Grignon affair on 24th December the whole movement gained

1. Diary of the Spring Vale Mission 1831 Bethlehem College Jamaica
2. Knibb Falmouthe op.cit.
3. Bleby, op.cit. 5
4. Hinton, op.cit. 117-118. Cox, op.cit. 83
5. Bleby, op.cit. 2-3



momentum, and by 26th they had begun to allow their anger to distort their reasoning. It was Bleby who attempted to describe what took place as the insurrection got under way, and who described the early skirmishes between the militia and the rebels. He was somewhat scornful of the adulation and assertions of heroism attributed to the leader of the militia who was, ironically, Colonel Grignon, even suggesting at a later point that there would have been less damage to property if the Colonel and his men had not been such cowards, arguing that the men under Grignon's command ran away from Montpelier leaving the whole area unprotected for the rebels to plunder and coerce many natives, who otherwise would have taken no part in the fighting, to join their ranks. This is in complete contrast to George Blyth's somewhat blind remarks in defence of the militia:

A very considerable number of the militia suffered by the hard duty and exposure which the insurrection occasioned, besides those who fell in battle - I know several, and heard of others, who caught fever and colds when on military duty, from which they never recovered. (1)

Of its beginnings Bleby wrote:

In the evening (26th December) as it grew dark, the first indication of actual revolt was given, by the burning of the houses and the sugar works on a large plantation called 'Kensington' the property of a Mr. Morris; and soon after, the example was followed on other estates; so that through the night the heavens were lighted up by the burning properties in all directions....The destruction of that property was the work of a few ungovernable spirits, who having broken into and plundering the rum stores, had become infuriated with liquor. The example, once set, was rapidly and extensively followed; and incendiary fires broke out on plantation after plantation till one of the fairest positions of this beautiful island was laid in ruin. (2)

Open rebellion spread as did the exaggerated reports. The Diary of the Congregation at New Fulneck for 1832 tells how the insurrection was seen by that little Moravian community:

The revolted slaves have united in large bodies, and being well armed, threatened to carry all before them. The town of Montego Bay it is strongly apprehended will be fired, and already the vessels are filled with the ladies, who fled to them for safety.

1. Blyth, op.cit. 65
2. Bleby, op.cit. 7-8

The fires seen in the night, and especially one observed last night are very alarming as they seem to advance nearer. Mr. Coke in riding through with the general informed us that Martial Law had been proclaimed, and that the order issued, that in every place where the master's house was burned all the negroes houses should be immediately fired.....(1)

The reference to well armed slaves does not seem to fit the evidence given in Grignon's own report presented to the Select Committee, in which he stated that his men discovered only a few arms and the powder was such that its only use could be for blasting and not the firing of muskets. (2)

Quickly the insurrection was crushed; from the Negro's viewpoint it had been a tragedy. Before they had time to consolidate any advantage which may have been theirs through the element of surprise, they had been quickly and meticulously crushed: ironically, the hysteria and the barbaric reactions of the authorities helped to achieve what the Negro revolt had failed to do, that is, to inaugurate the final step in the process of emancipation. Whatever damage had been caused by the rebels which, in any case, was mainly to property and not to life, no excuse can be made for the savage reprisals taken by the authorities.

1. op.cit. Bethlehem College Jamaica
2. Parliamentary Papers XLVII. 1831-1832

## 2. Baptist War

Scapegoats were needed, upon whom the responsibility for the tragedy could be placed, and by whose punishment atonement could be achieved. Without any hesitation, the plantocracy presented their victims for this vicarious role, the Baptists.

Though Dissent in general was indicated and suffered from the ensuing acts of reprisal, it was the Baptists who were made to shoulder the burden of responsibility for the whole sorry affair; and who were placarded by the plantocracy as the arch-villains of the piece, in an attempt to turn the prying eyes of the British Government away from their own shortcomings and guilt.

The presence of the Baptists in Jamaica from the moment that George Leile arrived from America had been unwelcome; a fact quickly made known to John Rowe on his arrival in 1814. (1) The reason for this hostility towards Baptists has no simple answer, but is most probably the cumulative effect of several factors. There can be no doubt that Anabaptist history, especially the Munster affair, (2) and the known Baptist support for both American and French revolutions led to the conclusion that they were all radicals, therefore a potential danger. Confirmation of this seems to lie in the fact that, along with other Dissenting bodies, they were, in the main, pro-abolition, hence natural enemies of a plantocratic system based on slavery.

More precisely, it seems likely that the Jamaican plantocracy were troubled by Baptist activity in America. Concerning the Frontier Baptist churches, William Warren Sweet points out that many of them welcomed the Negro slave into membership, especially in Kentucky, the relationship between the slave and the white man was most cordial "the church watching over the slave with as much care as over the white members". (3) This is well illustrated by the church at Savannah in Georgia, where George Leile was baptised. His letter dated 18th December 1791 indicates that he was not only treated with sympathy, but as an equal. (4) This

1. See above , 80

2. See above, 117, 118

3. Sweet, William Warren Religion on the American Frontier - Baptists 1783-1830 New York 1931, 48-49

4. Rippon, op.cit. 332-334.

attitude was, of course, not universal, and there was a considerable outcry at the way in which Baptists were treating their slaves as equals. A petition was presented to the Virginian Legislature from Cumberland County, drawn up by the Established Church, the charge being that "there have been mighty meetings of slaves to receive the instruction of their teachers, without the consent of their masters, which has produced very bad consequences". (1) No doubt the "very bad consequences" referred to the Negroes asserting their rights as human beings. In January 1807, two complaints were brought to an Association meeting, that a certain sister had stated:

1st. She once thought it her duty to serve her master and mistress, but since the Lord had converted her, she had never believed that any Christian kept Negroes as slaves.

2nd. For saying she believed there was thousands of white people wallowing in hell for their treatment to Negroes - and she did not care if there was as many more. (2)

There is evidence to show that among the many Negro slave revolts which took place in America Baptists could be found amongst the active leaders - it is also true that, as in Jamaica, Baptist was used in a generic sense to include numerous independant groups claiming to be Baptist. One such leader was David Barrow who, concluding that "holding, tyrannizing....slaves....is contrary to the laws of God and man", (3) was expelled from the North District Association only to become a leader of the Anti-Slavery Baptists, founding churches in the County of Southampton. Though this was a generation before the Nat Turner revolt of 1831, it is possible "that the activities of these people added a radical flavour to the atmosphere of Turner's neighbourhood". (4)

However, it must be remembered that there was little Baptist reaction to the question of emancipation until after the Revolution. This is partially explained by the fact that:

Baptists were strongest in regions where there was little slave holdings; they were committed to non-interference in civil affairs, while their all important objective at this period was the attainment of ecclesiastical freedom. (5)

Nevertheless, there was enough activity to warrant the Jamaican author-

1. Sweet, op.cit. 78

2. ibid, 328-329

3. ibid, 79

4. Aptheker, H. American Negro Slave Revolts New York 1944. 294

5. Sweet, op.cit. 77. Torbet, op.cit. 282.

ities acting with caution when it came to accepting Baptists into their society, for the cumulative effect of all the above factors made it almost impossible for the plantocracy to see in Baptists other than danger for their own system. This is further evidenced by the speeches of the West Indian interest in Parliament at this period, and the fact that Parliament was ready to accept the accusation that Baptist and Methodists were the cause of some trouble in Barbadoes. In 1815, it was stated in the House of Commons that the reason for the trouble was the Methodists and Baptists who had taught the slaves treasonable songs, especially the Baptists who had taught them to sing

We will be free - we will be free;  
Wilberforce forever! (1)

But this seems a strange accusation since there were no British Baptists working in Barbadoes at that time!

Meanwhile, the Consolidated Slave Code of 1826 was explicit in its condemnation of Baptists. Likewise, the activities of Burchell and Knibb on behalf of the slaves in membership with their churches, as in the case of Sam Swinney, were certainly not designed to endear the Baptists to the plantocracy. Thus given the least pretext it would seem that the Jamaican Assembly was determined to represent the Baptists to the world at large as interfering meddlers, rebellious sectarians, whose early removal from the island would be an act of benevolence.

It is not, therefore, surprising to find that Knibb and Burchell were seen by the planters as the embodiment of all that Baptists stood for; and thereby became the chief target of plantocratic wrath. When these men suffered it would appear that the planting community derived as much satisfaction as if the whole Baptist community were suffering the same fate - whether it were churches belonging to the B.M.S. or the Native Baptists, no discrimination was made - and in a sense this was true, for these two men more than any other had become their representatives.

Henry Bleby indicated the extent of this hostility when he quoted a statement made by a certain Mr. Beaumont, a member of the Legislature:

I have not changed my opinion with respect to sectarians. In 1828  
I told you that their influence was paramount to your authority.  
I have always thought it an evil influence, for it was produced by

1. Clarke, Dendy, Phillippo Memorials op.cit. 73  
Baptist Magazine 1816, 305

promising the slaves salvation, and raising money from them. (Mr. Beaumont was a sceptic, and no friend to religion or its ministers). The sectarian priests are like other persons, neither better nor worse: they are no more guilty of the late insurrection than are the advocates of reform in Parliament guilty of the conflagration of Bristol. As for the Methodists, they were certainly not concerned at all in the rebellion; for I never saw one of their sect apprehended; this is a fact worth a million of suspicion. "That the Baptists were ringleaders is undoubted....The fact is, in that part of the island where the insurrection commenced there are but few negroes of any but the Baptist persuasion: and so completely were they identified with it that the negroes called the insurrection 'the Baptist War' and the 'Black Family War' the Baptists being styled in slave parlance 'the Black Family'. (1)

Methodist implication was indicated by a statement in the Jamaican Courant, "there are five hanging woods in St. James and Trelawny and we do sincerely hope that the bodies of the Methodist preachers who may be convicted of sedition may diversify the scene." (2) Bleby himself was roughly treated, in fact was tarred and feathered, only escaping worse treatment with the help of Richard Brown, a member of Knibb's church, who was in turn fined for having helped Bleby. (3)

The whole atmosphere was literally anti-Baptist. Not only was traditional prejudice against them but circumstantial evidence pointed clearly in their direction. Philip Curtin writes:

In any event, all parts of the rising were so strongly under the influence of the Native or Official Baptist class organization that the rebellion was, in fact, what the Negroes called it - 'the Baptist War'. (4)

We have already referred to the fact that the term Baptist was used generically, as in the days of the European Reformation, and that much of the evidence in contemporary literature refers in general not to the communities belonging to the B.M.S. but, in the main, the more radical and indigenous Native Baptist groups. On the whole, the evidence points to the fact that the number of members belonging to the Missionary Society was singularly small indeed; though, as Knibb intimated, it would be foolish to deny that some were deeply involved. He stated before the Select Committee of the Commons "there were some of the Baptist

1. Bleby, op.cit. 24-28. possibly Bleby quoted this because it minimised the part played by the Methodists.
2. cited Augier, Gordon Hall, Reckord, op.cit. 146
3. Bleby, op.cit. 227
4. Burtin, op.cit. 86.

members engaged in the rebellion". (1) Later when asked the question:

who was the head of that Congregation to which those Negroes belonged who you say were taken away in the rebellion? Generally speaking, I think that they were connected with Mr. Burchell's church, but I will not say; there were some in different churches. In order to give a more clear idea of the truth, I think I stated that there were three taken up that belonged to my own church.

The others belonged to Mr. Burchell?

Yes, and some others; but I confine my remarks to my own denomination. (2)

Baptists were not alone in this involvement, for there was plenty of evidence to implicate those attached to the Moravian, Methodists, and even some Presbyterians. (3) The majority of the rebels, however, seem to have belonged to the new extremist religio-politico groups which had gradually proliferated throughout the island. Knibb, in a letter to Joshua Tinson, suggested that the leaders of the revolt were, in fact, men with no religious attachments - that is to say, no denominational affiliations; this would be true of those who were able to take the initiative out of the hands of Sam Sharp and directed the movement into a more violent way, though the presence of Sharp must have been an embarrassment to the Baptists. (4) That most of them had a religion akin to nationalism there can be no doubt, for there emerged a vigorous political movement, with all the religious fervour and organisation needed to create a popular people's movement. (5)

Evidence against the Baptists was produced in the form of membership tickets found in the pockets of some of the rebels, but as there was no uniform procedure or strict control over the distribution of tickets it was most unsatisfactory as evidence, as W. L. Mathieson illustrated:

No Negro could be included in a Wesleyan society who was not an actual member, but the Baptists had an order of probationers whom they called 'inquirers' and to whom as well as to members of their congregation they gave tickets. There were many lapsed inquirers who had come only once or twice for instruction - frequently but once; and a certain militia officer is said to have captured

1. Parliamentary Papers Vol. XX. 1831-1832. 242

2. ibid. 318-319

3. Moravian Conference held at New Eden March 1832 Bethlehem College Jamaica

4. Hinton, op.cit.

5. Past and Present Reckord, op.cit. 123

twenty-eight Baptist rebels, identified as such by their tickets, not one of whom had been to chapel for over two years. Moreover, the Baptists were less cautious than the Wesleyans in licensing black preachers who went about baptising and marrying for money. One such case had even a meeting house of his own, and he and many of his congregation were shot. (1)

The continued existence of these extremists, notwithstanding constant hostility, was due in no small measure to the teaching of the Dissenters, especially the Baptists with their emphasis upon the importance and the place of the layman in the church, which, as distinct from the Methodist use of the layman, gave much more facility for the leaders to take responsibility within the church; the Methodist missionary John Barry gave as his judgement:

if any thing were to be attributed to the Baptist Society, as connected with that insurrection it must have arisen out of permitting black men to exercise a greater degree of influence than we would have done. (2)

The Baptist concept of the 'Gathered Church' also made it easier for Native Baptist churches to be formed without being attached to the British Baptists, though this is not to say all Native churches were heretical and unorthodox. R. R. Madden, a keen Anglican and one of the Special Magistrates during the Apprenticeship period, wrote in 1834 of a Baptist church independent of the B.M.S., with nothing but praise:

The places of worship are numerous and well attended; there are two protestant churches, two Catholic churches, and several Baptist and Wesleyan places of worship. But there is one chapel of the former denomination on the Winward Road, the clergyman of which is a Negro, of the name of Kellick - a pious, well behaved, honest man who, in point of intelligence, and the application of Scripture Knowledge to the ordinary duties of his calling, and the business of life, stands a comparison with many more highly-favoured by the advantages of their education and standing in society....the building I am sorry to add, is in very bad repair; and, as poor Kellick is looked upon as an interloper by all parties he gets no assistance from any. (3)

He again speaks in glowing terms about Kellick in the second volume of his work, while Underhill informs us that Kellick, who had been baptised by Leile in 1801, became a minister in 1811, and in 1841 the House of

1. Mathieson British Slavery op.cit. 215. se above 72-74 for 'ticket question'
2. Parliamentary Papers Vol XX. 1831-1832, 104
3. Madden, op.cit. Vol. 1. 98-100. Vol. 11, 5.



Assembly, impressed by the work he was doing, gave him a grant of £200 for repairs and additions to his chapel, while the Corporation of Kingston gave a further £100. (1) Mathieson, with an apparent distaste for revivalism, in his The Sugar Colonies and Governor Eyre 1849-1866 speaks of Negro religion in terms of 'animal emotions' and later, of Jamaica being subject "to the phenomena known in the religious world as a 'revival'." (2) Knibb is quoted as describing the Native Baptists in uncomplimentary terms, as being "as ignorant of the Gospel as a Hindu or a Hottentot", but Knibb was known to say similar things about ministers of the Establishment, and was not alone in his criticism; he even called George Blyth a "sneaking friend", (3) one cannot prejudice the many by the few. That the Native Baptists as a group contributed to the insurrection cannot be denied, that they were responsible for the whole holocaust is untrue; that the British Baptists played some part is accepted, even though it may well have been unintentional. If any blame is to be laid upon the Baptists it is that their teaching on liberty and their stress upon the individual as a real person - emphasised vividly in their teaching upon Baptism - gave the slave a new dynamic conception of himself as a person. The logic of this teaching led the missionary also, when the issue was raised, to identify himself with the slave in his plight, and thus he interfered in the politics, knowing full well that it would increase his own troubles. Because of this 'identification' with the slaves, being for many of them a 'belonging' to this despised caste, the slaves themselves took encouragement and instinctively felt, rightly or wrongly, that support would be forthcoming from the missionaries.

It could be argued that the Baptists supplied the slave population with the material for revolt, which was a revolt for nothing less than complete freedom and the right to exercise the prerogatives of human beings. The material supplied came in the form of a new understanding of the Christian doctrine of man which included many of the economic

1. Underhill, E.B. The West Indies: Their Social and Religious Conditions Lond. 1862. 200-201
2. Mathieson Sugar Colonies, op.cit. 168.  
     Button, G. The Hero as Murderer Lond. 1967. 217-218
3. The Baptist Herald and Friend of Africa July 5th 1843

reasons usually cited as the cause of the revolt. But alongside this revolutionary content of Christianity, which could be described as a 'positive revolution' there is also a 'negative revolution' which produces a reaction against society and against institutional religion, resulting often in open revolt of the more violent kind, generally the outcome of Christianity being too closely allied to the establishment. It is not difficult to see how easy it was for the oppressed slave to expect from the missionary's talk of redemption and the Kingdom of God - not forgetting the 'brotherhood of man' which is a corollary of the 'Fatherhood of God' - some immediate benefit in terms of material relief. No amount of promises about the future can satisfy a man who is oppressed, his eschatology has its roots firmly planted in the present. To bear the chains of the slaves, as Blyth suggests, was not enough, the chains needed to be snapped; thus it was that men like Knibb and Burchell, who were prepared to attempt just this very thing, gave the rebels the encouragement they required, not in so many words but in the attitude of belonging, which they revealed so clearly.

However, before this freedom could emerge as the norm for all men, the Church, as the custodian of this freedom had to suffer a period of persecution which was to test to the full the loyalty not only of the missionary, but also that of the church member.

### 3. Reprisals

Although in the long run the insurrection played an important role in speeding up the process of emancipation, the price of freedom demanded from the Negro meanwhile was very high. The severity of the reprisals which quickly followed on the revolt bore no relationship whatsoever to the damage to life and property caused by the Negroes. The brutality meted out in the name of justice was an insult to the very meaning of the word; it was little wonder then that the volatile Knibb exploded into an attack upon the plantocracy with all the venom he could command. The gentle, patient, conservative approach advocated by Dr. Kilpatrick could have made no impression whatsoever on this situation - even Kilpatrick's hero, George Blyth, had to admit that the only person likely to have any influence on the Negroes at that time was Knibb. (1)

For several decades the plantocratic system, with the official approval from the Assembly, had browbeaten its slaves - which was to be expected as the Assembly was made up of planters. To have expected a sudden change of attitude on the part of the authorities at that moment would reveal a total misunderstanding of the situation; all the evidence points to an increase in violence against the slave ever since the attempt of Fowell Buxton to introduce the idea of emancipation in 1823. Hitherto, the plantocracy had ignored any suggestion of kinder treatment of the slaves without any repercussion, but this time they had gone too far.

Knibb's latent anger and passion blazed forth after his own personal suffering during the early days of 1832. Combined with the sufferings of his colleagues and church members it stung him into what can only be described as his 'obsessional activities', forcing him over the edge he had so tenuously skirted since his arrival in the island: all the hatred and fear of the system which had, until then, revealed itself in restrained protest, now completely took over. Knibb, from that moment, became obsessed with a passion to stamp out slavery. It would be unwise to go as far as one of his biographers, K. C. Lusty, in claiming that Knibb "fought Slavery and won Freedom" (2) implying a single-handed attack,

1. Kilpatrick, op.cit. 30, 299

2. Lusty, K.C. How William Knibb fought Slavery and Won Freedom Lond. 1904

but it would be equally unwise to ignore the importance of Knibb's obsession as a vital element in the Jamaican struggle for freedom, for its passion did not die out with the signing of the papers making the Negroes free, but was channelled into a positive programme for the establishment of the Negroes as citizens of Jamaica.

When the insurrection broke out Burchell was on the high seas returning from furlough, while Phillippo remained in England recovering from illness; it was, therefore, Knibb, together with two of his colleagues, Whitehouse and Abbott, who had to bear the first onslaught against the missionaries made by the authorities.

Though it can be shown that many of the slaves belonging to the dissenting churches were instrumental in protecting their masters' property, even in capturing some of the rebels, (1) it made little impression upon the enraged planters who, having already pre-judged the Baptists and Methodists as guilty, sought only to legalise their anger through fierce repressive measures.

There can be no doubt that a partial reason for their inhuman reactions was fear; the white minority had for so long lived an ambivalent existence in Jamaica, loving and hating with intensity. The nineteenth century was no different from the eighteenth in its attitude towards the Negro, it "oscillated between extreme hysteria and unbelievable smugness". (2) The Haitian revolt, with all its brutality, at the end of the eighteenth century still conjured up fear and inevitably came to mind when anyone mentioned the word revolt - even in 1865 at the time of the Morant Bay disaster it was cited by those who sensed trouble. The fear of a slave rebellion as well as an exaggerated fear of emancipation itself found some temporary release in the brutality displayed during the reprisals. It took a considerable time for this fear to work itself out of the plantocratic system. The Apprenticeship system which followed the Act of Emancipation in 1834, though giving the planter a hold on the Negro still, was marked by an intense period of brutality; even those who were sympathetic to the Abolition Movement were not completely free from fear as seen in a letter from Lady Normanby, wife of Earl Mulgrave, who had replaced

1. Knibb Falmouthe op.cit. Cox op.cit. 84

2. Patterson, op.cit. 276

the Earl of Belmore as Governor in 1832:

God knows I think slavery a wicked and unchristian practice. I think it demoralizes a country altogether, makes it doubly necessary for people to consider before they make a sudden change....here, alas! one sees unmixed evil, the other side unmixed good, and each will maintain his own opinion without any reference to the measure proposed in England and, meaning to do good, they will ruin many kind and estimable families irretrievably. They will set loose a lawless rabble upon a population of women and children, unarmed and defenceless in every way, and I fear bloodshed of every revolting description will be the consequence. The planters are smarting with their wrongs; they have nothing to lose if this measure passes; they are certainly used unjustly, and even if no bloodshed takes place, and they leave the island for Canada and America, which many intend to do what will become of this rich and fertile island? Maybe you will say that the slaves will cultivate it, but they are not yet advanced enough in civilisation. Slavery brutalizes, stupefies a person,....they have nothing but daily mechanical labour to perform; the energies of the mind from childhood are suppressed and never called into play, they must be amalgamated with a free and superior people before they will be fit to form a population. (1)

Fear had blinded the eyes of most of the white population to the real potential of the Negro to adapt, which was certainly evident when emancipation became a reality; Lady Normanby's judgement concerning the effects of slavery were correct, but she seems to limit the effects to the Negro, in reality it affected the whole population: the Negro had had no real example of advanced civilisation; perhaps it was left to the missionaries to accept and understand this potential, and this was one of the greatest contributions the missionary was to make in the history of Jamaica.

Knibb became the principal target for attack, becoming aware of Martial Law when a soldier came into his yard and "seized a saddle for the King's service" (2) while one of his horses was taken and ridden almost to a standstill. (3) On January 3rd Knibb was forced to enlist in the militia, much against his will; on the following day he was arrested by a certain Captain Paul Doeg, without any charge being made against him, on his arrival at the Barracks he discovered Abbott and Whitehouse in the same predicament. After a period of intimidation, the three men were transferred to Montego Bay for trial, they journeyed in a somewhat

1. cited in Long, A.V. Jamaica and the New Order. Kingston 1956. 18

2. Knibb Falmouth op.cit.

3. Waddell, op.cit. 62

leaky canoe and "beneath the rays of a meridian sun". (1)

Their treatment at Montego Bay was no different from that which they had received in Falmouth, the only indication as to the reason for their arrest being that they were "infernal Baptist parsons". (2) A letter published in the Courant on January 6th confirms the judgement that they were arrested simply because they were Baptists:

The Baptist ministers are now in custody, and we are satisfied they would not have been taken into custody upon slight powers by Sir Willoughby Cotton, we hope he will afford them fair and impartial justice. Shooting is, however, too honourable a death for men whose conduct has occasioned so much bloodshed and the loss of so much property.....(3)

Fortunately, a friend of Thomas Abbott, a Mr. Roby of the Customs Office, arranged for a change of prison atmosphere, transferring them to his office where, with the help of some friends, he secured their release on bail. (4) Meanwhile the families of the missionaries sought the safety of the home of a Mr. Maderson, while Roby tried to find a ship's captain who would give the missionaries and their families protection, but to no avail, all were too afraid to be associated with Knibb and his friends; eventually the captain of H.M.S. New Star took them aboard for the night.

Another missionary, Francis Gardner of Savanna la Mar, was arrested on January 15th on a charge of failing to enlist in the militia, added to which they brought in a false witness to testify that Gardner had encouraged him to rebel. (5)

Two months later Knibb and Gardner were again arrested and charged with inciting the slaves to insurrection; when they were tried at Montego Bay - Knibb had been eagerly awaiting an opportunity to confront the planters with a mass of evidence but it was not to be - the planters were unable to find evidence against the missionaries, therefore the court could only bring in a verdict of nolle prosequere. (6)

Meanwhile, on January 7th the Garland Grove sailed into Montego Bay, amongst its passengers were Thomas Burchell and a new missionary,

1. Knibb Falmouth op.cit.
2. ibid
3. Gardner, op.cit. 278
4. Hinton, op.cit. 123. Cox op.cit. 93
5. Cox, op.cit. 96
6. Hinton, op.cit. 127-131

Walter Dendy. When the Garland Grove dropped anchor a naval frigate, H.M.S. Blanche, came alongside and a small party boarded the Garland Grove. It was soon evident that the only person in whom they had any interest was Burchell, who was quickly transferred to the frigate. No charge was preferred, all that was explained was that it was Martial Law. It was a known fact that the Negroes had expected Burchell to bring back their freedom papers and that one of the leaders of the insurrection, Sam Sharp, was one of the deacons at Montego Bay Baptist Church. Once on board the Blanche Burchell's papers and letters were searched and read, he says that "from the tenor of my letters" they would "discover my sentiments". There can be no doubt that amongst his letters there would be similar material to those sent to his brother and to Dyer.

Having been transferred back to the Garland Grove he was kept a prisoner until February 10th, but his release meant simply a transfer into the hands of the Civil authorities, this time on a trumped-up charge involving a false affidavit, sworn by a free coloured man named Samuel Stennet. Stennet had stated that he had been told by Burchell to say that freedom was theirs and that the Negroes were to fight for it. It was soon proved that this was a false statement, Stennet confessed to being bribed to make the affidavit. This confession was made on February 14th, but it was not until March 14th that Burchell was actually released. Obtaining a passage aboard a ship bound for America, Burchell and his family sailed from the island of terror. (1)

Members of the other Dissenting missions were also persecuted and some narrowly escaped death. Mr. Pfieffer, the Moravian missionary at New Eden, was imprisoned in the Parish Church at Manderville, the town jail being so overcrowded. Had it not been for a sympathetic militiaman finding forty witnesses on the very morning of the proposed execution, Pfieffer would surely have died. (2) Bleby also escaped severe punishment. (3)

It took the whole of the year 1832-1834 for the fury of the reprisals to burn itself out, and during that time one of the chief methods of impeding the missionaries was the charge that they were preaching in un-

1. Burchell, op.cit. 184-219

2. Buchner, H. J. The Moravians in Jamaica Lond. 1854, 90

3. Bleby, op.cit. 227

licensed buildings, often refusing to accept the validity of existing licences. Baylis, Clarke, Tinson and Abbott, together with a Mrs. Renwick, from whom they had rented a house, were brought to trial, a trial prejudged before it began; a little later Nichols and Abbott who were in jail together, gave adequate proof that their house was licensed for worship, were refused a hearing. (1) Meanwhile, Dendy also appeared before a court on a similar charge and his account of the trial illustrated the extent to which the Assembly would go in order to destroy the Dissenters:

The constable who apprehended me was the informer and witness against me.

Magistrate. Mr. Dendy, you are charged with preaching at Annatto Bay without a licence. Is it true that this was the case?

- I am not bound to criminate myself; I presume, gentlemen, you consider you have evidence sufficient to establish it.

Here the witness was put on oath.

Witness, cross examined by W.D.

You say you hear me preach; were you outside or inside the chapel?

- Outside.

Mr. D. How long did you remain?

- No time.

Mr. D. No time! not any time! not one minute?

Here the magistrate told the witness he must specify some time.

Witness. A few minutes.

Mr. D. You say you saw me in the pulpit; did you hear me read any text? - No. Any chapter? -No. How do you know I preached?

- There is a difference between reading and preaching; I know the difference.

Mr. D. Are you positive I preached?

- I think you were preaching.

Mr. D. You think I was preaching; and nothing more than think; I might be only reading; I frequently read without keeping my eyes fixed upon the book before me....

Magistrate. We do not want to be lectured.

Mr. D. I consider, Sir, I have a just right to question the witness; that I preached is not established, it is not proved.

Magistrate. But we believe you did; we take the word of the witness (2)

Dendy was using legalistic quibbles, and for his pains was sentenced to jail, but his comment indicated that the authorities were happy to believe any witness who would testify against the missionaries.

Having crippled the Dissenting leadership, the next onslaught was directed at the Dissenting chapels, no doubt to cause utter confusion

1. Baptist Magazine 1833, 239-240
2. ibid. 240-241



and despair amongst the sectarian community, for it meant the removal of their symbol of belonging. The impetus for the attack seems to have come from a movement calling itself the Colonial Church Union, which had amongst its members even some Jews, though it was principally made up of members of the Established Church and some members of the Church of Scotland. (1) It was said to have been formed by the Rector of the parish of St. Ann, the Rev. George Bridges, author of The Annals of Jamaica. (2) The main purpose of the Church Union was to safeguard the two established churches on the island, the Anglican and the Scottish: its strength lay not in the township of Kingston, but rather in those areas surrounding the plantations. Bleby points out that the attempt to create interest in Kingston did not succeed, though the minister of the Scottish Kirk attempted to involve his church. (3)

Their aims were clearly set out and published for all to read. At a meeting of one of the Colonial Church Union branches, held at Falmouth on March 24th 1832 it was resolved that

1st. That the representatives of the parish be instructed to support every measure that may be brought forward in the House of Assembly for preventing the sectarians any longer being permitted to disseminate their dangerous tenets amongst our slave population.

2nd. That it appears from a mass of moral evidence, that the sect called Baptists has been most instrumental in misleading our slave population by the inculcation of doctrines teaching disobedience to their masters. As sectarianism leads to revolution both in church and state, it behoves us to adopt means to prevent any other than duly authorised ministers of the established churches of England and Scotland from imparting religious instruction to the slaves, and in furtherance of this measure we call upon all proprietors of estates, or their attorneys to put down all sectarian meetings on their respective properties.

3rd. That our magistracy should be most strongly urged to withhold for the future, their licences to sectarian ministers and their places of worship.

6th. That this meeting pledges itself to operate with other parishes in the island in the general Colonial Church Union, for the purpose of protecting our interests from the diabolical machinations of the Anti-Slavery party in England, and their emissaries the sectarian preachers in the island. (4)

1. Baptist Magazine 1833, 440

2. a history of the island written in two volumes and published in 1827

3. Bleby, op.cit. 211

4. Abstract of the Report of the Lord's Committee on the Condition and Treatment of the Colonial Slave. Lond. 1833, 103

Such sentiments were expressed throughout the island, the sentiments soon became action. The movement injected and added venom to an already dangerous situation, fear and hatred were fanned into a fiercer intensity as is revealed by the newspaper reports; the pro-planter papers enjoyed a field day, especially the Jamaica Courant in which the following letters were published on February 7th, showing the intense delight that a number of people derived from the persecution of the Dissenters.

I cannot allow the post to start, without saying that I remained long enough in Falmouth to see Baptist and Methodist Chapels pulled down. This good work was accomplished this day, by the troops after their return- conquerors from the seat of war...

again:

Let Bruce know that the great and glorious work has commenced. It is now 10 o'clock, and all hands at work, demolishing the Baptist and Wesleyan Chapels. The Methodist Chapel is down, and the men are hard at work on the Baptist. The roof of the latter is not yet off, but so injured as to make it as well off as on. It is standing, true, but supported by a few posts only. The men have gone for fire hooks to complete the work they have undertaken. There is the devil to pay here today (as you may suppose) among the Saints and their followers. Weeping and wailing, gnashing of teeth - wringing of hands, groans, interrupted at times with curses and imprecations on the soldiers.

Knibb was not left out of the personal invective;

Some true-heated Jamaicans have truly ennobled themselves this night, by rasing to earth the pestilential hole, Knibb's preaching shop. (1)

The news of the burning of the Chapels was perhaps, even more than the insurrection itself and the imprisonment of the missionaries, a matter of great concern and disgust to the British public, for the British sense of the importance of property was outraged - it was an age when property was seen as greater value than human life, to steal or damage property could invoke the death penalty yet rape produced only a fine.

The outrages perpetrated by the Colonial Church Union were undoubtedly a last ditch stand to retain the old conservative ways, and a refusal to accept the advent of a new era, evidenced in a letter to the Cornwall Courier:

The war now may be considered at an end. The deluded victims of sectarian treachery have tried their strength, and we are satisfied of their utter incapacity for warlike operations. The ease

and celerity with which they have been subdued, and appalling examples have struck terror which will not be got the better of; and we might anticipate a long series of peace, were it not for the portentous events with which the political horizons of the parent state is over-charged. Thus we are to expect nothing but what the most rancorous animosity, backed by power, may inflict; but we are happy to observe that a feeling and spirit is aroused through the island which will enable the injured and insulted inhabitants to withstand and repel the assaults of their enemies. This has been manifested in the destruction of those dens of sedition and hypocrisy, the sectarian chapels....Here is one of those instances where the representatives were powerless and the people have taken it in their own hands. When we say the people, we do not mean a mob - a gang and thieves and pickpockets, such as the happy politics of England now acknowledge as their liege Lords; but we mean the magistrates, vestrymen, and freeholders of the island, who have been in arms to preserve their property, and who have in open day done this thing in self-defence. (1)

The leaders of the Colonial Church Union had not read the English scene clearly, the establishment of a reformed Parliament would not, and could not allow the conservatism of the West Indian Planters to exacerbate an already difficult situation in Jamaica, thus King William was persuaded to issue a proclamation outlawing the Colonial Church Union on the grounds that its activities violated religious toleration and "Whereas, such proceedings are contrary to Law, and tend to the imminent danger of the Public Peace in our Island." (2)

There were immediate reactions from the Colonial Church Union and its supporters, who treated with contempt the Royal Proclamation and produced a proclamation of their own:

In various parts of the island, the King's proclamation with the Governor's despatch, was taken down almost as soon as posted; and placards such as these have been put up in several parishes - DOWN WITH MULGRAVE - NO SECTARIANS - INDEPENDENCE OF JAMAICA - NO WHIGS - SUCCESS TO COLONIAL UNIONS: and in the face of the King's Proclamation! The daily papers are full of the abuse of the King and his representative. Our Governor is called the BAPTIST-LOVING EARL - THE HEARTLESS WHIG - THE NAMBY-PAMBY NOVEL WRITER &c &c. I assure you his Excellency is treated with as little ceremony as the missionaries, short of personal violence. Although the proclamation calls on all printers not to publish the Resolutions of the Colonial Unions, immediately the most abusive articles appeared in the papers, laughing at the King, the proclamation, and the Governor....(3)

1. Abstract of Lord's Committee, op.cit. 103-104
2. Baptist Magazine 1833, 176-177
3. ibid. 178

Such defiance served only to indicate the urgent need for the Home Government to stamp out the Colonial Union, for it bred also the seeds of revolt of a different kind, the talk of linking up with the United States, suggesting that another colony might break away from parental control. In fact, some of its supporters challenged Britain's right to the Colony; the Home Government saw the whole movement as a potential revolutionary organization which had to be dealt with, and the question of religious toleration was as good a ground as any upon which to indict the movement. (1)

The Colonial Church Union operated a not ineffective 'closed shop' policy on the declining work situation, making the support of the Colonial Church Union a condition of employment. Henry Whitely, a young Methodist lay preacher who came to the island as a representative of his firm, mainly to see what the situation in Jamaica was like, found it impossible to get any employment because he was a Methodist, unless he joined the Church Union. (2)

Governor Mulgrave, with the help of the Magistrates, was eventually able to enforce the demise of the Union, but not before the havoc of burning chapels had caused added expense to the total bill for emancipation, which had to be faced by the British public. The local planters who had supported and encouraged the burning of the chapels (3) made it impossible for any compensation to be paid locally, as is shown by a letter from one Thomas Levermore of Falmouth to Joshua Tinson, written on June 12th 1832:

These two days I have tried my utmost to get the affidavits sworn to, and am sorry to say, that I could not succeed in having them signed, on the 11th. I waited on Mr. Miller, he read the affidavit and said that he was not in the island at that time when this had taken place, and referred me to a magistrate to get it signed. Mr. George Marriot was in company with him, and I embraced the early opportunity by presenting the affidavit to him, he read the contents and would not sign it, stating that he was not at Falmouth at the time, and this morning I went to Mr. William Wray, and presented the affidavit to him, he read the same, and would have signed it, but in consequence of his discovering one of his servants to be implicated with the rest in burning the chapel he declined signing the

1. Ragatz, op.cit. 446
2. Whiteley, H. Three Months in Jamaica in 1832: comparing a period of seven weeks on a Sugar Plantation. Lond. 1833
3. Burchell, op.cit. 205. Narrative of Recent Events &c op.cit. lists of those implicated in the burning of the chapels.

same, asking me what was the reason Mr. Miller did not sign the affidavit, that he could easily have done so. I told him I could not tell his reason, but he desired me to go to a magistrate. Mr. John L. Wallcott & Galloway was present and said that they would have nothing to do with the affidavit, Charles Brown and Lewis Williams were present and heard all that passed. Mr. Walcott refused to sign Mr. Williams' affidavit, Mr. Joseph Hodgson refused to sign Charles Brown's. Mr. Wallcott stated on the regard of such business he would have nothing to do with it, and desiring Mr. Wray to return me the affidavits, and accordingly he did. Mr. Wray I think would have signed the affidavits but his motive was he wanted to consult with the brother Magistrates to hear their opinion respecting the affidavits before he did so. In my opinion Sir, it is a determination of the whole of the Magistrates not to sign any affidavit for any of us whatever and I would something could be done with them for refusing to do their duty. There are at least 8 affidavits I have drawn out and have in reserve....(1)

With the incarceration of many of the leaders and the destruction of many of the churches - their symbol of a personal identity - the Negroes, somewhat at a loss, were left at the mercy of the Plantocracy; it says much for their fidelity that they remained faithful to the church at all, for if the leaders suffered the members did more so. Knibb's church Record Book, kept at Falmouth, reveals something of the suffering and the pressure brought to bear upon members during those terrifying days of Martial Law. A significant entry appears not infrequently against the names of church members - "Martial Law, none attendance". It does not take much imagination to reconstruct what lies behind this simple entry. It could mean that the member was now too scared to be seen attending the Falmouth church, past experience had taught that to be a Dissenter, and a Baptist in particular, brought danger; or it could even mean that the member was maimed, even dead, as a result of the ill-treatment given by the militia. There is clear evidence in the Record Book that this was certainly true of a number of Knibb's members:

William Gardner, shot in Martial Law, without trial.

John Barrett, received 500 lashes in Martial Law, and sent to work in chains for life.

Another slave from the Orange Valley estate has this recorded by his name:

Murdered by the Militia in Martial Law, died praying. (2)

1. Letters of Walter Dendy in the West India Reference Library, Kingston, Jamaica. Baptist Magazine 1833. 578-579
2. Church Record Book still in the keeping of the Knibb Memorial Church Falmouth, Jamaica.

An entry of interest is one that states simply: "John Reeves, left the church and joined the Presbyterians in Martial Law". In the light of a statement found in Gardner's History of Jamaica, "...the Presbyterians suffered little with the exception of a few hard words" (1) it would suggest that it was safer to be found amongst the Presbyterians than the other non-episcopalian groups. (2) This would certainly be true of the Church of Scotland, but not strictly true of those churches which belonged to the Presbyterian Missionary Society who also worked on the island.

The news percolating through to England was naturally an admixture of truth and exaggeration, this could only be counteracted by someone from the island returning to England and giving the facts: for the Baptists Knibb was the obvious choice; thus deputed by his brethren, he returned to his homeland to defend the name of the Society for which he worked. For him, however, this was only a secondary matter. He had greater work to do, so he eagerly accepted the chance given to him by his brethren.

1. Gardner, op.cit. 36
2. Diary of the Negro Congregation at Fairfield 1835 Bethlehem College tells of Moravians still suffering from their ordeal during Martial Law of 1832.

#### 4. Knibb, Burchell and Phillippo in England 1832-1834

By June 1832, when Knibb arrived in England, the political climate had undergone a drastic change. As the ship bringing Knibb home sailed up the English Channel he asked the pilot "what news?" On being told that "The Reform Bill was passed" he reacted with excitement, "thank God, now I'll have slavery down, I will never rest, day or night, till I see it destroyed, root and branch". (1)

This was indeed a fortuitous moment, politically and emotionally, Knibb recognized that this was the moment to end slavery for, as Professor Burn~~s~~ claims, for two or three generations "the English mind was vitally affected by the idea of revolution (whether as the ultimate hope or the ultimate terror) by the prevalence of the revolutionary mystique". (2)

With the return of the Whigs to power, reform of some kind was inevitable; they had talked of reform for a number of years, alongside 'civil and religious liberty' and the 'abolition of Colonial Slavery'. Lord John Russell had advocated disfranchising the particularly notorious constituencies as far back as 1819-1820, though it was thought that a comprehensive 'Reform Bill' was impossible. By 1830-1831 the Whigs, still an aristocratic party, were prepared for some political innovation, but this was all that could be expected, sweeping radical changes were never the intention of the reformers at that time; as John Stuart Mill later reflected, "their lot was cast in the ten years of the inevitable reaction" after the Reform Act and the "few legislative improvements which the public really called for" had been effected. (3)

The extensions of the franchise were modest and limited, which naturally dissatisfied such radicals as Cobbett and Hunt; the basic reason for this disaffection no doubt lies in Dr. Kitson Clark's comment that the middle class, however defined, did not dominate the country after 1832:

Certainly they were deemed to be politically important at the time of that Reform Bill, and that Bill was proposed and passed largely as a recognition of their importance; but after the Bill the final control in politics still lay without question in the hands of the old governing classes, the nobility and the gentry. (4)

1. Hinton, op.cit. 139

2. Burn, W.L. The Age of Equipoise Lond. 1964, 66.

3. Gash, N. Reaction and Reconstruction in English Politics 1832-1852 Lond. 1965, 1.

4. Kitson Clark, op.cit. 7

As for the Dissenters, its chief importance lay in what it led to later - namely, the Municipal Corporations Act of 1835 which gave many towns into the hands of the Dissenters. Many of the centres of industrial development and expansion, where the Reform Bill had some direct impact, were also the areas in which Dissent was at its numerical strength and influence. Because of this fact, the Anti-Slavery Campaign gained some momentum, for the Reform Bill also ensured, whether intentionally or not, that the West Indian influence in the Commons was reduced to a state of virtual ineffectiveness, so much so that the Abolitionists, backed by the Dissenters and the Evangelical Anglicans, were able to press at the general election at the end of 1832 that all prospective candidates be made to promise their support to the cause of abolition, as a condition of their election. (1)

The passage of such a Bill could not be expected to go unchallenged; the rejection of the Second Reform Bill by the House of Lords in 1831 set off a series of riots in such places as Derby, Nottingham and Bristol, so that when Knibb eventually arrived in England the 'revolutionary mystique' was more than just an idea or an atmosphere. The second French Revolution in 1830 had revived fears of bloodshed, and during the Autumn of 1830 unrest broke out again in the agricultural districts of southern England, which resulted in nine men or boys being hanged and about 450 others sentenced to transportation, though the only casualty had been one man killed by the yeomanry. (2) Knibb, therefore, found himself speaking to a society not without understanding or unsympathetic to the cry of freedom coming from the colonies. It was a time when the working man in England was beginning to ask for political freedom and activity as was witnessed in the activities of the Birmingham Political Union led by Thomas Attwood, which in 1838 promoted a national petition which, says Kitson Clark "may reasonably be held to be the beginning of the Chartist Movement". (3)

Knibb's reply to the channel pilot indicates a political alertness

1. Anti-Slavery Reporter V. 32. For discussion of the whole Reform Bill and its implications see Briggs op.cit. 236-285. Gash, N. Politics in the Age of Peel Lond. 1953. Carrington, op.cit. 293
2. Woodward, op.cit. 79
3. Clark, op.cit. 125. Briggs, op.cit. 247-248



advantageous to anyone leading a moral campaign, it reveals also that Knibb was concerned not with defending the missionaries, for which he had been deputed to return to England, but with the abolition of slavery. This was clearly indicated in his statement to Charles Stovel, minister of the Prescott Street Chapel, London:

I wish you to know I am here not to risk my connection with the Society alone, I am here to gain the emancipation of these slaves or die. (1)

Knibb could not be certain of the kind of reception he would be afforded by the B.M.S. Committee on this unofficial visit. Rejection by the Society was a possibility he well knew, (2) there were those amongst the supporters of the Society, as well as members of the Committee who strongly objected to the stand made by the missionaries during the insurrection as a violation of the Missionary Society's policy of non-involvement in political concerns for, said Hinton, "having imbibed a maxim then very prevalent and, certainly, for the slaveholders, very convenient, that slavery was a political subject, they still wished, notwithstanding all their agents had suffered, to maintain silence on it, lest a political character be given the mission". (3) One sympathetic Committee member however, who was also an active member of the Anti-Slavery Society, was Dr. Thomas Price, at that time pastor of the Devonshire Square Church, London, later to become the editor of the Eclectic Review, as well as a founder of the Religious Freedom Society. Price gave a detailed account to Hinton of a conversation he had with Knibb:

I exhorted him to be decided and, if necessary, to break with the Committee rather than be gagged, I believe he slept at my house that night preceeding the meeting of the committee. He was calm, but most determined; and his decision was in the highest degree honourable to his integrity, as there was then no certainty of his being sustained by the feeling out of doors, against any adverse decision of the committee. (4)

Stovel, too, had helped in preparing the ground for Knibb's appeal, by inviting him to preach in the Prescott Street Chapel just before the meeting of the Committee, since several of his members were, in fact, Committee members, Knibb would have a chance to condition them. (5)

1. cited Payne Freedom in Jamaica op.cit. 38
2. Hinton, op.cit. 141
3. ibid, 142
4. ibid, 142-143
5. Payne Freedom in Jamaica op.cit. 38.

The Committee had little alternative other than to accept Knibb's account of what had taken place. Even if they had rejected him, their reputation as having radical tendencies had been underlined by the events which had taken place in Jamaica: Price describes what took place at the Committee:

Knibb gave a detailed account of his sufferings, and those of his brethren, which was received, of course, with the deepest interest. Mr. Dyer exhorted prudence, and a temperate policy. At length Knibb stood up, and his words as near as I can recollect, certainly in substance were, 'Myself, my wife and my children are entirely dependent on the Baptist Mission; we have landed without a shilling, and may at once be reduced to penury. But, if necessary, I will take them by the hand, and walk barefoot through the kingdom, but I will make known to the Christians of England what their brethren in Jamaica are suffering'. I believe I was the first to speak after this declaration; and I need not say, I exhorted to stand by his avowal, and ensured him of the sympathy and co-operation of many. (1)

The outcome of that meeting was an invitation to Knibb and Phillippo to address the Annual Meetings of the Society just two days after the special committee meeting. On June 21st Knibb and Phillippo attended the Annual meetings which were held in the Spa Fields Chapel. Hinton's version recorded that Phillippo was strangely quiet on the question of slavery, (2) while Phillippo's biographer, E. B. Underhill, stated that it was an agreed policy, in order not to stop the flow of missionary candidates for the West India Mission, and intimated that it was misleading of Hinton to have suggested that Phillippo had refrained from tackling the subject of slavery as if there was some sinister motive; it was, said Underhill, Mr. Phillippo's duty to dwell on the

missionary aspect of their work. The stations, he urged, must not be deserted because of this dreadful interruption; the chapels must be rebuilt, and the missionary must be replenished and increased.... Mr. Hinton was not aware that this topic (slavery) was left to Mr. Knibb by pre-arrangement with the Secretary, Mr. Dyer. (3)

Knibb's main argument was that the situation in Jamaica compelled the missionaries to make a stand against the planters - and now even the faith itself was in jeopardy, chapels burnt down, missionaries imprisoned without charges against them, and severe restrictions placed on worship; it was an argument calculated to sway many of those who

1. Hinton, op.cit. 142-143
2. Underhill Phillippo op.cit. 102-103
3. ibid.

hitherto could not make up their minds about the rightness of the action taken by the missionaries. If the demand for information was one of the features of the age (1) then Knibb took full advantage, for in his account he left nothing to the imagination; if telling the gruesome details would move the emotion and the will and the Society corporately to some positive action, then this he would do, as only he could:

I plead on behalf of my brethren in Jamaica, whose hopes are fixed on this meeting. I plead on behalf of their wives and their little ones. I call upon children by the cries of the infant slave who I saw flogged on the Macclesfield estate, in Westmorland. I call upon mothers, by the sympathies of their natures. I call upon parents, by the blood-streaming back of Catherine Williams, who with heroism England has seldom known, preferred a dungeon to the surrender of her honour. I call upon Christians, by the lacerated back of William Black of King's Valley, who back, a month after flogging, was not healed. I call upon you all by the sympathies of Jesus.....and if I die without beholding the emancipation of my brethren and sisters in Christ, then, if prayer is permitted in heaven, I will fall at the feet of the Eternal crying, Lord, open the eyes of Christians in England, to see the evil of slavery, and to banish it from the earth. (2)

Such language was not designed to placate the moderates and could only cause them some uneasiness, as is suggested by Dr. Cox's account of how Dyer anxiously tried to interrupt Knibb by pulling at his coat tails, but to a man in full flow upon his subject this hardly proved an effective intervention and, in fact, only served to produce one of the most dramatic passages in Knibb's oration:

Whatever may be the consequence, I will speak. At the risk of my connection with the Society and all I hold dear. I will avow this: if the friends of the mission will not hear me, I will turn and tell it to my God; nor will I desist, till this greatest of curses, slavery, is removed and 'glory to God in the highest' inscribed upon the British flag. (3)

One of those present, William Newman, president of the Stepney College, recorded in his diary:

21.6.32. Annual Meeting of our Mission Society. Full house. Kinghorn commenced. Phillippo, Knibb astonished all with their fervour; and feeling of manly eloquence. Barry the Wesleyan missionary; Stovel; Campbell of the Tabernacle. Rarely, if ever in my life, have I heard such addresses. The excitement was amazingly

1. Woodward, op.cit. 93
2. Hinton, op.cit. 147-148
3. Cox, op.cit. 195

intense. (1)

The immediate result was the commitment of the Society to join in the battle for abolition of Negro Slavery in the British Colonies, hence they were flung headlong into the political arena whether they liked it or not. To have rejected the challenge of Knibb would have been disastrous, therefore the obvious next step was a meeting at Exeter Hall - renowned for being the platform for evangelicals of all denominations. Once again Knibb moved the vast audience and thus began his campaign, with the help of Burchell and Phillippo, throughout the British Isles. On his journey in Scotland Knibb had the companionship of Eustace Carey, who had inherited a hatred of slavery from his famous uncle, William Carey, and from his own experience as a missionary in India. Eustace Carey tells us something of the reactions to Knibb in Edinburgh, indicating that Knibb was at this time "comparatively new to the exercise of public oratory....His manner was not graceful... nor were his words tastefully selected, or always even accurately combined." (2) Yet in his rough way Knibb was able to create some impression of the events in Jamaica, for Carey goes on to say "I have witnessed congregated masses in that city burning, and almost raving, with indignation at the system, as he depicted its cruelties and demonstrated its crimes." Knibb's ability to cultivate the art of debate was soon developed for "his tact and self-possession in a little time became so remarkable, that he would easily convert adverse and startling occurrences into an occasion of profit, and even triumph to his cause." (3) To such an extent was this ability developed that Carey, in a comparison between Knibb and Burchell, claimed Knibb as the more effective speaker for he "speaks with greater energy". (4)

The heightened political and emotional atmosphere in England, due to the events leading to the Reformed Parliament, gave justification to Hinton's comment that Knibb's power lay not so much in his ability as an orator, but that the subject was the right one for his day, (5) using

1. The Baptist Quarterly Vol. XVIII No. 6, 278. Cooper, R.E. 'The Diary of William Newman (II)'. Stepney College is now Regents Park College Oxford
2. Hinton, op.cit. 166
3. *ibid*, 167
4. Carey, Eustace Mrs. Eustace Carey: A Missionary in India Lond. 1857, 465
5. Hinton, op.cit. 528-530

the new political weapon which had been forged on the anvil of anti-slavery, the weapon of organised moral indignation, (1) Knibb quickly developed the art of exploiting the situation to great advantage as the report of a meeting in the Byrom Street Chapel, Liverpool, on July 24th indicates:

He was sent as an advocate for the suffering, the degraded, the persecuted British Slave, who had been robbed of everything which raised a man above the brute creation or gave him title to rank himself in the human family, and had now been forbidden by men to seek consolation from the Father of mercies, who had made of one blood all the nations of the earth, who desired that every man should come to the knowledge of the truth, and who had commanded them to break the fetters of slave, and bid the oppressed go free... Slavery had thrown down the gauntlet; proud in its dying strength, it endeavoured to render unavailing the death of the Son of God. In Jamaica it had defied the living God, persecuted his ministers and pulling down his temples; but the stones cut out of the mountain would overthrow it; it would fall to rise no more; and then the earth would rejoice, and God would bless it. (2)

This extract from Knibb's address was recorded in the Liverpool Mercury, a paper sympathetic to the abolition cause, which during the controversy over the debate with Mr. P. Borthwick at Bath printed the following letter on August 10th:

Mr. Knibb you may well look down upon as an insignificant personage, because he has not had episcopal ordination. But by the recital of his suffering and those of his brethren from the West India persecution, he is kindling a fire you will not easily quench. (3)

W. L. Mathieson shrewdly comments "much as the planters detested Knibb, they would have done better in their own interests to have tolerated him in Jamaica". (4) and goes on to suggest that:

The first reformed House of Commons, owing largely to the efforts of Knibb and the Agency Committee, had been elected to a great extent on the question of slavery.....Popular feeling was a reservoir of enthusiasm which required only to be tapped, and this operation was now easily performed. (5)

Even the conservative, cautious Dyer wrote to a missionary "It must be evident to the dullest capacity and is universally seen and felt here, both by friend and foe, that either Christianity or slavery must fall". It would appear, however, that Dyer's condemnation of slavery does not

1. Kitson Clark, op.cit. 38
2. Hinton, op.cit. 152-154
3. Liverpool Mercury August 10th 1832
4. Mathieson British Slavery op.cit. 275
5. ibid, 230

have quite the same basis as that of Knibb or Burchell, namely that it is fundamentally wrong and a degrading of humanity, but rather that the system as it existed in Jamaica was a hindrance to the preaching of the Gospel. In the same letter he states "unless slavery be extinguished, the hope of freely publishing the gospel in Jamaica is fallacious".(1)

One of the public meetings which caused a minor sensation was the debate between Knibb and P. Borthwick, who was the agent for the West India Association. Borthwick's main task was to suggest that Knibb and Burchell were overstating the events which had taken place, and thus throw some doubt on the actual situation in Jamaica. He also stated that Knibb had refused to meet him in public debate. As the real charge was one of treason, levelled against both Knibb and Burchell, this was a serious indictment: to have suggested that Knibb was a liar and a coward served only to generate more passion, if not finesse, from Knibb as Burchell illustrates from the record of another meeting that Knibb "handled Borthwick, the West India advocate, rather roughly". (2)

The actual meeting took place on December 15th in the Assembly Rooms, Bath; the Bath and Cheltenham Gazette reported that the debate lasted for four and a half hours and that it was a long and noisy meeting. Knibb, not missing a chance, heightened the drama by producing an iron collar which had been worn by a slave. Borthwick's main claim was that Knibb and Burchell had, since their arrival in England, been making treasonable statements, namely that the men who planned the Jamaican insurrection were worthy of a memorial to their memory. A great deal was made of this charge in the Edinburgh Post which Borthwick used to the full, it was countered by Knibb who said that what he had stated in Edinburgh was that if a European had started such a revolt in the cause of freedom he would have been granted a memorial, however, seeing that it was a Negro revolt the leaders only deserved death. (3)

The debate gave publicity to the cause of abolition, reports were in papers as far afield as The Portsmouth Herald, The Newcastle Courant and the West Briton.

It was not only Knibb who dealt roughly with Borthwick for, on 13th August in the Wesleyan Chapel, Irwell Street, Salford, George Thompson, an agent of the Anti-Slavery Society, delivered an address in which he

1. Burchell, op.cit. 257 2. ibid. 258

3. Defence of The Baptist Missionaries. A Discussion between the Rev. William Knibb and Mr. P. Borthwick at the Assembly Rooms Bath Lond. 1832 Baptist Magazine 1833, 32-35. Hinton, op.cit. 158-165

attacked Borthwick with great vigour. (1)

Meanwhile, Phillippo, who had not yet fully recovered from the illness which had brought him to England before the insurrection, took as active a part as was possible, and made a tour of Wales. During this tour he was accompanied by a Negro, who caused quite a stir in many of the villages and towns, as Phillippo described in a letter to his wife.

passing through clouds of dust, and narrowly escaping an accident by the breaking down of our vehicle, which compelled us to walk for two or three miles to reach our destination. In the town all soon became bustle and confusion. The shoemaker threw down his lapstone, the carpenter his axe, the blacksmith his hammer - in a word, all business seemed to stand, the inhabitants rushing to the doors and windows and into the streets, to see our black companion, having previously heard of him and his history, and some never having seen a black man before. (2)

Burchell, too, undertook an extensive itinerary, going to Scotland, Ireland, and throughout England; he also became one of the spokesmen with Fowell Buxton and the leaders of the Anti-Slavery movement in the House of Commons, on the vexed question of compensation for the damage to the Dissenting chapels. Together with Knibb he delayed his return to Jamaica until the question of recompense for the damage had been settled. (3)

Parliament was ready to accede to the claims of Abolition, and the Act of Emancipation was passed in 1834. Though it was not what had been hoped for by the missionaries and many of the Anti-Slavery Society members, at least it was a definite step in the right direction; freedom had to be undertaken in stages and stage one began on August 1st 1834. Though this date is often quoted as being the date of emancipation, not by any stretch of the imagination can it be called freedom, for it led to the initiation of the Apprenticeship period.

Fowell Buxton had accepted the principle of a gradual emancipation for some time. Though, in 1831, Joseph Sturge had urged him to go all out for complete emancipation, Buxton was adamant in his views, and wrote in January 1831 to Sturge:

The speedy and entire abolition of all slavery is my sole object.

1. Speech by George Thompson Esq. Being a reply to Mr. Borthwick's Statements. See also the Raymond English Collection, Rylands Library, Manchester.
2. Underhill, Phillippo op.cit. 106
3. Baptist Magazine 1834, 132. Manning, op.cit. 428

I have no opinion whatever of any measure that falls short of this, and for none will I seek. But in the means to be used for this end we may possibly differ. My wish is to strike a blow at the root; to ensure, in the first place that no new victim will enter this dreadful state; to declare, in short, that from a given period all children shall be born free.....In this my course is decided. I have adopted it after the deepest and most conscientious deliberation.....But I wish first to prevent any more water flowing into the lake, before I begin to empty it. I mean, however, not only to disavow all consent to slavery of the already born, but to commit myself to prepare measures for their speedy though gradual, emancipation. (1)

Another influential Quaker was James Cropper of Liverpool, who became the father-in-law to Joseph Sturge, since Sturge married his daughter Eliza, who died in childbirth, just a year after their marriage.(2) Cropper, writing to Sturge in 1830, was an advocate of complete abolition, and though his letter indicates that he was uncertain whether the country would accept this as the right procedure, the Yearly Meeting to which he belonged had, by minute, recognized the principle of immediate emancipation. (3) Though disappointed, Knibb and his colleagues, together with those who had been sharing the work of the Abolition Society, had witnessed the final downfall of the slave system in the British Colonies. On August 7th 1834, the first week when 'officially' there were no slaves in the Colonies, Knibb, Burchell and a large company of people attended a meeting of valediction, held in the City of London Tavern; Burchell's biographer gives a vivid account of what took place, he says they had met

to receive the offering of the churches and other friends to the cause of philanthropy, and to listen to the farewell address of its indefatigable and triumphant advocates. After tea, of which nearly seven hundred persons partook, the meeting was held in the large room, which was soon filled to overflowing; hundreds who thronged the door being ultimately obliged to leave without participating in the pleasures of the evening. W. B. Gurney, Esq., was again called to the chair. Mr. Dyer then proceeded to read a list of subscriptions and collections towards the required moiety of the sum for the rebuilding of the destroyed sanctuaries in Jamaica; the total amount of which included what had been collected and promised the previous meeting, was found to exceed £10,000. An expression of mingled astonishment and delight burst from the whole assembly, on this announcement being made, illustrative as it was of the power

1. Richards, op.cit. 98-104
2. Conybeare, op.cit. 38
3. Extracts from Letters of the Late James Cropper. Cohen Library Liverpool



of the voluntary principle. Mr. Burchell then arose to address the meeting, and was succeeded by his friend and brother, Mr. Knibb.....Long after the echoes of this meeting had died away, contributions continued to pour in from every quarter; so that, before the end of the month, the sum received had reached the handsome total of nearly £15,000. (1)

The list of subscriptions was headed by H.R.H. The Duchess of Kent, with a gift of £10, and the Right Honourable Earl of Mulgrave, also with a gift of £10; the list itself ran to thirty-three pages, showing the many and varied sources of income: special rallies, individual churches, as well as "Proceeds of Ladies Finery" Bath! (2)

But whereas, on the one hand, the Government passed an Act and organised the payment of £20,000,000 in compensation to the slave owners, only the paltry sum of £11,695 was finally granted for rebuilding all churches, after the first offer of £5,500 had been contested by Buxton, who secured the additional £6,195 on condition that the B.M.S. raised an equal amount. (3) There was, of course, no compensation whatsoever paid to the Negro slave for a lifetime of loss of personality!

Apart from the two important facts that 'emancipation' was now on its way and was on the Statute Book, and that the Government had offered a small recompense to the Dissenting churches which had been destroyed, there remained one more important factor resulting from the missionary work in England, namely the denomination as a whole was now fully committed to entering the political field, as far as the question of slavery was concerned. Apart from the Quakers, they were the first - admittedly forced by circumstances and the dynamic personalities of men like Knibb, Burchell and Phillippo - to accept the responsibility for the welfare of the Negro no matter what the consequence.

One can imagine that Knibb must have wished that Jamaica could have viewed the Apprenticeship system in the same light as did the island of Antigua, for they opted to go ahead with full emancipation without any trial period, arguing:

We do not, we confess, discover any sufficient reason referable to this island, why unrestricted emancipation should not answer as

1. Burchell, op.cit. 267-268

2. Contributions for the Rebuilding of Churches and School Rooms in Jamaica belonging to the B.M.S. Lond. 1843.

On compensation to planters see Carrington, op.cit. 293-296

3. Payne Freedom in Jamaica op.cit. 44. Baptist Magazine 1834, 271

well in 1834 as in 1838 or '40; and we are perfectly satisfied that no possible future efforts during so short a term of ten years can bring the slaves of most other colonies to the same state of religious and social improvement as that to which those of Antigua have already reached. (1)

Bermuda, likewise, abandoned the idea of Apprenticeship and entered immediately into full emancipation. (2)

Knibb and his colleagues still had a fight on their hands when they returned to Jamaica. Even though there were no longer 'slaves' the tensions on the island had not been reduced, instead new ones had been created and had to be resolved. But, at least for the time being, they had the backing of the parent Society, even if they had to face deeper hatred and suspicion than before. The time had come for them to play an even greater part in the history of the island than before, but not without its cost.

1. Augier and Gordon, op.cit. 198
2. Baptist Magazine 1835. 398

1. A New Situation

Whilst the West India missionaries were pleading the cause of the Negro with the British public, back in Jamaica the work of trying to salvage something out of the wreckage was being shouldered by the missionaries who had remained with their congregations.

Reports reaching Mission Headquarters in London highlighted the loyalty of the Negro Church member; not surprisingly, the steady increase in the numbers attending Dissenting churches, despite continual persecution, were a feature of the reports.

Abbott, who was acting as locum-tenens at Montego Bay until the return of Burchell, had been able to recommence the work at Lucea with encouraging results; while at Falmouth the work was continuing in a room belonging to one of the members, because of the destruction of the Church building: the room held 200 people, being "no more than seven feet high" into which was crowded 500 people. Not unexpectedly, Baptist missionaries were very unpopular in Falmouth, a fact Abbott soon discovered when he tried to rent a house in the town:

You have already been informed of the difficulty of procuring a house at Falmouth. During my last visit there, I used every effort in my power to obtain one, but I regret to say without effect. So strong is the current of prejudice against us here, that although several persons have a house untenanted, none will rent....(1)

Meanwhile, John Clarke informed the Committee that the congregation in Spanish Town and St. Thomas-in-the-Vale had increased, though he was himself only allowed to work and remain out of prison on "a very heavy bail" having been charged under the new licensing laws.

The reason for the increase in church attendance seems to be straightforward: after the insurrection and reprisals the Negro could only turn for help to those people who had been closely involved with him during the reprisals, and who were themselves now deeply committed to the cause of abolition. Whether the vast number turning to the Dissenting churches did so for purely religious reasons remains questionable, nevertheless, it remains a fact that they looked to the churches and the missionaries as a source of guidance and help for the future.

Burchell's church at Montego Bay displayed a remarkable depth of concern for its minister, at a period of great unpopularity. Together

with the church at Gurney's Mount they sent a letter to Dyer in London, stating that they were "grieved that there should have been such a desire among many in this our island, to attach to his character such infamy..." signed by fifty-two members on behalf of the two churches. (1)

Meanwhile, the British Government recalled the Earl of Mulgrave from Jamaica, much to the regret of the missionaries who sent him a Memorial, thanking him for his sympathy and concern during the tragic days through which they had passed. It was little wonder, however, that the plantocracy were glad to see him go, a man who could thank the Dissenting missionaries for "their discreet and praiseworthy conduct during the period of my Government" could not possibly be a friend of theirs. (2)

Back in England, the Government was preparing the Act of Emancipation the Preamble of which stated:

Whereas divers persons are holding in slavery within divers of his Majesty's colonies, and it is just and expedient that all such persons should be manumitted and set free, and that a reasonable compensation should be made to persons hitherto entitled to the services of such slaves for the loss which they will incur by being deprived of their right to such service....a short interval should elapse before such manumission should take effect, be it therefore enacted.....That from and after the First Day of August One Thousand eight hundred and thirty four all persons who in conformity with the laws now in force in the said colonies respectively shall on or before (August 1st 1834) have been duly registered as slaves in any such colony and who shall by such registries appear to be on (August 1st 1834) of the full age of six years or upwards, shall by force and virtue of this Act, and without the person's execution of any indenture of the apprenticeship, or other deed or instrument for that purpose, become and be apprenticed labourers. (3)

This intimation of an Apprenticeship scheme was a great disappointment to the missionaries and not a few abolitionists; the whole scheme was a compromise that could not possibly satisfy either side. In the crucial debate concerning the advisability of giving the Negro immediate freedom, and whether he was ready to receive it, the architects of emancipation were undecided, and true to the British concern for property, the question of compensation for loss of property loomed large in the discussions. The whole problem was discussed by James Stephens and Henry Taylor (who were working in the Colonial Office) together with

1. Baptist Magazine 1833, 146-147

2. ibid, 1834, 268-269

3. Augier and Gordon Sources op.cit. 193-194. Baptist Magazine 1834, 250-352

Lord Howick. Taylor had previously submitted a scheme which was unworkable: the slave was to be given Monday and Tuesday of each week or, rather, those days were to be bought for him from his owners with public money. With the money the Negro might make from those two days he would eventually be able to buy his freedom. Howick, too, proposed that a tax be levied on the slaves' provision grounds, thus compelling the Negro to work on the estate in order to meet the tax. Governor Mulgrave pointed out that these scheme proposed in England, where there was the machinery for such plans, were unworkable in Jamaica where there was no such machinery. (1)

Into the Colonial Office at that time came Mr. Edward Stanley (later the fourteenth Earl of Derby) as head of the office; he attempted to draft out a proposal without the aid of his secretaries. Having tacitly to admit defeat, he called in James Stephen who drafted the measure that was finally accepted. Stephen's son tells how his father did not get notice of the task until the Saturday morning, whereupon he went home and completed the task by mid-day on the Monday. (2)

The intention of such a scheme was a worthy one, it was an endeavour to enable both the master and the slaves to become accustomed to a complete new way of life; the master to get used to having to pay wages, while the slave had to adjust to being free and able to choose his employer, not to mention a new and important fact, his being paid for the work he did.

Despite criticism, the Act was accepted and all attention was focussed on August 1st 1834 when, officially, there were no slaves in the British Colonies. Naturally, the Dissenting churches were eager to share in this historic day. In many parts of England services of thanksgiving were arranged; the minute book of the small Baptist church in Folkestone records:

Friday 1st August 1834 EMANCIPATION OF SLAVES. This being the day appointed by the Legislature of England for the Emancipation of Slaves throughout her Colonies: two services, one commencing at half-past six o'clock in the morning, and another at seven in the evening, were held in the meeting to commemorate the happy event. (3)

1. Burn, W.L. Emancipation and Apprenticeship in the British West Indies Lond. 1937. 108-115
2. Stephen, L. Life of Sir James Fitzjames Stephen Lond. 1895. 47-49
3. Clough, A.A. History of the Folkestone Baptist Church 1667-1967 Vol. II Private Publication 1967. 207

Churches in the Metropolitan area met together at different centres for united services of thanksgiving; in the Midlands two services, one at nine o'clock in the morning and another at six in the evening, were held in the Cannon Street church Birmingham; the Bible Society, too, celebrated the occasion by sending out copies of the New Testament for all the newly 'freed' slaves in the West Indies. (1)

If there was an air of optimism in the British churches, there was a more cautious attitude in Jamaica itself. From Falmouth Dendy reported

The day passed off in a very different manner to what a day of public rejoicing generally does; every countenance beamed with joy, and every heart appeared filled with gladness, but there was none of that noisy ebullition of feeling which is frequently displayed on far less interesting occasions. We cannot but attribute this, in great measure to the influence of the Gospel, which combines peace with joy; and which Gospel so many profess to believe and embrace. On the following Sabbath (the 3rd) Jamaica witnessed such a Sabbath as was never before seen....all quietude and repose, and naught was to be seen but decently dressed people going to and from different places of worship....(2)

Dendy could have included also the sense of disappointment with the apprenticeship scheme itself. Tinson recorded that the Parish of St. Anns had been visited by some troops from Kingston, preparing them for the coming of August 1st and commented that "the quietness of the Day was surprising"; (3) Phillippo, who had returned from England in time for the celebrations of August 1st, wrote a long and somewhat embellished account of the day in Spanish Town. (4)

There are, however, other considerations to be taken into account, in order to assess the reasons for this cautious reaction to the historic event of August 1st, other than Dendy's claim for religious influence, however important an aspect that may be.

The Apprenticeship system itself was unwanted by both planter and Negro, the Negro in particular could not be expected to welcome a system which introduced discrimination within the slave community. Phillippo, in a letter to Joseph Sturge, stated that "already altercations between the two classes have arisen and the injustice of the arrangement denounced".<sup>(5)</sup>

1. Baptist Magazine 1834. 392-394

2. ibid, 493

3. ibid, 495-496

4. ibid, 496-499

5. Rawson Papers. Rylands Library Manchester.

The division was a simple one, the predials, those who worked on the plantation as field workers, were to be given freedom in 1840, while the non-predials, the domestic and tradesmen, were to be granted freedom in 1838; those two years' difference were sufficient to start another rebellion which was the very thing Phillippo feared.

Another consideration was the bewilderment experienced by the majority of the Natives. Expected for three-quarters of the working week to remain an unpaid worker for the same master as before, it was little wonder that Mrs. Coultart wrote home:

The poor things were puzzled. They were told they were free on the first of August, had a general holiday, and rejoiced at the event; and then they were called to work again - as before. 'Free, no free at all; work like before-time'. (1)

The old slaves were saying that they were too old to be apprentices to any trade- for apprenticeship was understood by them, as it is today, to mean the preparation for a trade, but, in fact, it was slavery dressed up. (2)

Technically, Knibb and Burchell returned to a situation different from that which they left in 1832, but in reality the previous tension had only been replaced by a new frustration with which the plantocracy were totally incapable of coping. Once again the burden of stabilising the country lay upon the missionaries - a fact which has receive scant recognition over the years. The period of reconstruction had commenced.

1. Baptist Magazine 1835. 42
2. Black, op.cit. 145-148

## 2. Apprenticeship

After the Act of Emancipation in 1834, a confused situation was created in Jamaica:

The British Government in the Nineteenth Century was not concerned to interfere in the social and economic adjustments created by the new situation. The local administration, representing the planters as it did, were still prepared to introduce measures which, by giving the newly created peasantry an alternative to wage labour, would have threatened to deplete their labour supply....(1)

The Government's attitude towards the West Indian Colonies seems to have been typical of the period: let them work out their own problems of administration, which was the product of the new laissez-faire attitude to the Colonies, well illustrated by the thinking of Cobden and Bright, a concept which could only hinder positive thinking on Colonial affairs. Unfortunately, the fact that the administration was securely in the hands of the plantocracy seems not to have been a serious consideration. Strong leadership from the British Government was needed to command respect from both sides of Jamaica's sharply divided society, this failure explains, in part at least, why Jamaica was, for so long, one of the most truculent of the British Colonies: a condition well demonstrated by the difficulties of the administration of the apprenticeship scheme.

Apart from any clear understanding of the slave situation, there was a marked lack of sustained thought concerning the implications of such a scheme, not to mention the somewhat tenuous organisation of the system, for there was a failure to keep the Special Magistracy,(2) set up to see that the scheme functioned, fully manned, and this is not surprising, since the passing of the legislation gave only a very short time for administrative desires to be constructed and implemented with precision. One of the Government's greatest weaknesses lay in its failure to recognise that the attitude of the planters towards the Negro was no different to that prior to August 1st 1834.

The planters' attitude was natural enough, for their civilization represented the growth of several centuries and it could not be expected that it would be surrendered in response to the passing of a single law; the persistence of their attitude, nevertheless, served to make the whole

1. Clarke E. My Mother who Fathered Me Lond. 1957, 19
2. See below p. 188-191



situation most precarious. (1)

The British Government saw apprenticeship as an attempt to bridge the gap between a Slave Society and a Free Society; the planters, however, saw it differently, a distinction well described by Professor Douglas Hall, in his essay The Apprenticeship Period in Jamaica 1834-1838

It is not difficult to see how two main attitudes towards the apprenticeship developed. On the one side the British Government and the supporters of emancipation regarded the apprenticeship as a period of transition during which labourers would be guided along the paths of social and economic improvement towards complete freedom in 1840; on the other side, many of the slave owners and the slave managers regarded the apprenticeship as a part of the compensation, a short and partial reprieve granted that they might squeeze the last juice out of the compulsory labour before the great ruin of freedom set in. (2)

Even though the Jamaica slave owners were awarded £6,149,939 for their 311,070 slaves, it could not buy a new attitude towards the Negro, neither could it help the planter to see any hope for the future, the money barely met the debts so many of the planters had been incurring over the years. (3) Added to which was the fear that the moment the Negro was freed he would leave the plantation altogether and thus bring about the end of the plantation as an economic force in the island, with total ruin for the plantocracy.

Disappointment concerning the new system was expressed by many, especially amongst those who had campaigned for immediate and total abolition. Naturally, their disappointment sprang from different reasons from those of the planters; James Cropper, the Liverpool Quaker and businessman, shrewdly pinpointed the weakness of the system in a letter to his son John:

I am sorry to say that I am indeed disappointed with the Bill (re Apprenticeship). In its present shape it is a wasteful expenditure of the public money, without absolutely securing anything in return. The Apprenticeship is to last for 12 years, and in some cases with the children much longer. Though the allowances afforded, and the clothing were declared insufficient, and an order in Council was made the rule during this long apprenticeship. Out of the 43 hours per week they are to have time allowed for the cultivation of their grounds - but what that time is to be, what the quality of the land,

1. Catherall, G.A. 'Freedom with Involvement' Foundations Vol. XI No. 4. Oct-Dec. 1968, 345-361. For a Jamaican attempt to introduce an alternative scheme, the Evelyn scheme, see Curtin op.cit. 124-126
2. Hall, op.cit. 3. Hall Free Jamaica Yale 1959, 19
3. Sherlock, op.cit. 73

or how near to their homes, is all to be left to the Colonial Assemblies - not only is this left to them, but all the laws and the regulations for the carrying the plan into effect are left to them and this after the experience we have had of them - But then comes the master piece. They are to be allowed to substitute their own acts even for the enactments contained in this Bill, if these are satisfactory the Crown, which means the ministry for the time being.....Such a Bill is no security against insurrection and, so far as I now understand it, it secures absolutely nothing: and therefore to pass it, in its present shape might be just to give the West Indies twenty millions of money, and whether we should get any return must depend on the ministry of the day. If a reformed Parliament can pass such a Bill as this, the country has declined and has made a great stir for nothing. (1)

Two years later Cropper, still protesting at the way the Apprenticeship was developing, advocated the stopping of all payments of compensation to those planters who refused to conform with the agreements of the Apprenticeship Acts. (2)

George Stephen, one of the legal advisers to the Abolitionists, conducted a survey of the Jamaican Abolition Act, and in his abstract, written in 1835, declared that:

The Apprentice remained an unemancipated prisoner on the estate to which he was attached, substantially liable to the same punishments and labouring under the same incapacity as before, the whip following his every step, hard labour awaiting him at every turn. (3)

Only two months after the system had been in operation the Governor, Lord Sligo, reported "I cannot, after two months' trial of the new system, report to you that it is working at all in a satisfactory manner..." (4)

In spite of Cropper's fears of a twelve year apprenticeship, the system in Jamaica was organised so that from August 1st 1834 all under the age of six were to be free, while all above that age were apprenticed to their masters. The predials were to be granted freedom in 1840, while the non-predials would be freed in 1838. The apprentices were to work 40½ hours per week without payment, under the same, if not worse, conditions as before: the 13½ hours left to them were free to employ as they pleased, either working on their own provision grounds, cultivating food crops, saleable in the markets, or hiring themselves to other

1. Cropper letters. July 10th 1833. Cohen Library, Liverpool University
2. *ibid.* May 16th 1835
3. Burn Apprenticeship op.cit. 168. this seems to be the only sustained work on the subject at the present.
4. Hall Apprenticeship op.cit. 5.

planters for higher wages. As we shall later see, Cropper's reference to the nearness of the provision grounds to the Negro's home became an important issue in the planters' attempts to keep the Negro servile. New provision grounds had been a feature of most West Indian estates, and had provided the planters with a method of feeding their slaves without extra cost to themselves, consequently the Negro was adept at using what land he had to supply his needs. (1)

A special magistracy was established to see that the scheme worked; in theory the slaves now had someone to whom they could turn for advice and help, especially when they had grievances, this legal protection was also afforded to the planters who were the better able to manipulate the magistrates for their own benefit. Because Special Magistrates were the pivot around which the whole system revolved, the fact that the Magistracy was one of the weakest points in the system ensured the inevitable failure of the scheme. The weakness was two-fold: first there were insufficient men who would take on the work, and secondly the conditions under which they were expected to work did not, in general, attract the best type of man for the delicate work involved. The first applicants came mainly from retired army and naval officers, who, because of a reasonable pension, were able to manage with the £300-£400 offered as salary, for work in a climate that had already killed off many missionaries living a similar way of life there. (2) Life was extremely hard for the more conscientious person, one such magistrate, E. D. Baynes, remarked in January 1838:

I trust that I shall be pardoned for remarking that the duties entailed on the special magistrates have been without parallel the most dangerous, the most difficult, and at the same time the most thankless that have ever fallen to the lot of any magistracy whether paid or unpaid, to perform. (3)

It was a great temptation for the weaker character to make life as easy as possible, and this could be achieved by falling in with the wishes of the planters. This situation was aptly put by a proprietor when he wrote:

unless a magistrate be a notorious patronizer of the planters nothing is too bad for him; whereas, for those who are what are

1. Parry & Sherlock, op.cit. 147, 192-193. Hall Free Jamaica op.cit. 19
2. Augier, Gordon, Hall, Reckord, op.cit. 174-178
3. Burn Apprenticeship op.cit. 196

called 'Busha Magistrates' that is, under the influence of the overseers, nothing is too good. (1)

There were those whose integrity would not allow this bribery to affect them, their difficulties increased, which also had the result of making the conscientious magistrate lonely, socially ostracized by the majority of the plantocracy.

One such Special Magistrate was R. R. Madden, who has left a record of his experience in two volumes entitled A Twelvemonths Residence in the West Indies published in 1835, in which he indicates how vulnerable the magistrates were to the pressures of the society in which they were expected to act as mediators: pressure from the still considerable power of the plantocracy, pressure from the extreme hardship and poverty they were expected to endure. It was expensive becoming a Special Magistrate; he needed at least three horses, costing somewhere in the region of £120-£150 sterling, plus saddle and equipment, as well as tropical clothing and uniforms, amounting to no less than £50, all to be paid for by the magistrate himself; living conditions varied, and accommodation, whatever its standard, was by no means cheap. (2)

As Madden was in Jamaica to prepare for August 1st 1834 he was in a good position to see how the country was reacting; his comments reveal the unprepared state of the island for this transitional stage through which they were expected to pass:

If they (the Negroes) have any ground for discontent, it is the length of the probationary term of apprenticeship; the necessity for which they do not understand, the the probability of seeing its termination they may be unable to comprehend....The magistrates of the country have what they claim the insult to brook, of transferring their authority to a Stipendiary magistracy - strangers in the land, and appointed by an obnoxious government.....the time is fast approaching, and I see no adequate preparations making for change. (3)

His remarks concerning an area of opposition illustrates a fact which keeps recurring, concerning the relationship between the Jamaican plantocracy and the British Government, namely that the Jamaican authorities believed themselves to be de jure the sole authority; "the magistrates of this country" objected to the claims of an "obnoxious government"

1. Knowsley Pamphlets. Vol. 571 Jamaican Slavery 'Jamaica Under the Apprenticeship System' by a Proprietor. 1838. 35
2. Burn Apprenticeship op.cit. 197. Madden op.cit. Vol. 1, 81
3. Madden op.cit. Vol. 1, 191-192.

wrote Madden, and could not be expected to take kindly to the arrival of the Special Magistrates.

After 1st August 1834 Madden noted that there was an improvement in the "moral condition of the Negro" which he credited to the labours of the Dissenting ministers: this underlines the fact that much of the stabilizing work of the island after the fury of 1832 was carried out by the missionaries. The Special magistrates, already depleted in number, could not possibly cope with the increasing problems of human relationships; Madden, together with a Surgeon and six others, came to Jamaica in October 1833, (1) by the end of the first year of the Apprenticeship system four had died and four had returned home. (2) Madden himself, after only twelve months, could stand it no longer, and was one of those who returned home, but not before he had experienced enough of the system to make some valid observations concerning the future of the scheme. He was wise enough to acknowledge that there were two parties upon whom the whole scheme depended for its failure or success: his judgements imply that neither the planters or the Negroes understood what it was that the British Government was trying to accomplish, and that neither party was prepared to accept it even if they did understand; on the part of the plantocracy he suggests six areas of failure: Firstly, the non-residence of the majority of the proprietors of the large estates, followed by the fact that the majority of resident proprietors were unable to pay for the extra work done by the Negroes. The division of interests of attorneys who managed the estates and the owners, contributed to the mismanagement of many estates, while the importunity of merchants at home (to whom two-thirds of the estates were mortgaged) for large returns, while the means of obtaining them with the diminished time of labour that could be compelled, diminished also cultivation. There was also the jealousy of the local magistrates whose function was superseded by that of the Special magistrates and, finally, the limitation of the power of the overseers.

On the side of the Negro, however, he pointed out their incapacity, or unwillingness to comprehend prospective advantages, and their natural

1. Madden, op.cit. Vol. 1, p.vi
2. ibid, Vol. II, 206

reluctance to work without wages. There was a tendency, in some instances, to withhold their own time from the planters, and that of their children under the age of six years, as a retaliation for past grievances, real or imaginary; or as a reaction to recent deprivation of the old allowances. (1)

The main task of the magistrate was to see that the new relationship between slave and master did not explode into another revolt, they were to arbitrate in all disputes and to be as impartial as possible, for the Colonial Office had promised that the magistrate would be a man "uninfluenced by local assemblies, free from local passions". (2) There were those men such as Richard Hill, a man of colour, who fulfilled that promise (3) but, unfortunately, such men were outnumbered by the less scrupulous. The early days of the experiment seemed in some areas to suggest success; it was recorded from some estates that a new lease of life had taken place, and the production of sugar increased, while some of the planters found it more profitable to work their estate under the new system than during the days of full slavery, though this was far from being the general experience. (4) Even Burchell wrote that "the Apprenticeship system is working much better than I anticipated it would". However, in the next sentence he qualified his judgement somewhat: "the apprentices have conducted themselves with most admirable propriety, where they have been treated as human beings and not as brutes". This did not mean that he was converted to the system, far from it, for in the same letter he intimates that he deprecated the way in which many of the magistrates were carrying out their duties, they were, he wrote "...just so many hard-hearted drivers, doing their best to meet the wishes of the planters, and assimilating the present system as nearly as possible to the old." (5)

There was one grave discrepancy in the organisation, which placed the conscientious magistrate under great difficulty, namely, there were no geographical boundaries within which a magistrate could exercise his authority without interference; leading to incidents in which one magistrate

1. Madden, op.cit. Vol. II, 286-287

2. Burn, Apprenticeship op.cit. 197

3. Long, op.cit. 26-27

4. Hall Apprenticeship op.cit. 13-14

5. Burchell, op.cit. 295. Comer, op.cit. 4 for similarities in America after the Civil War.

countermanded the findings of another, most frequently to the advantage of the planters. This fact is well illustrated in two contemporary books which, in their own way, made a considerable contribution to the shortening of the Apprenticeship period: J. Sturge and T. Harvey's The West Indies in 1837 and James Williams' Narrative of Events. Sturge and Harvey, both of them leading Quakers, tell of a certain Captain Brownson, who brought four Negroes to be punished, but refused to have them tried before the magistrate resident in their district; he took them before a certain Mr. Bourne, who sentenced them to hard labour and flogging. (1) The James Williams Narrative recounted the way in which a master could, and did, send offending slaves to different magistrates until the verdict wanted was reached. The Narrative of Events describes the many acts of brutality against Negroes for the most trivial of things; one Negress named Nancy Daly, was put into prison for "looking sulky" at the overseer. Yet it was in the details regarding his own treatment that Williams reveals something of the weakness of the whole system of special magistrates, and the almost complete inability to see justice done. (2)

Williams was an apprentice on the estate of G. W. Senior, at Penshurst, near to Brown's Town. His freedom had been purchased by Sturge, whom he met at Spanish Town on March 23rd 1837, travelling back with him to England. (3)

While in England, Williams wrote of his experiences, which were published and given maximum publicity. His detailed account of persistent punishment and the refusal of Senior to accept the judgement of the special magistrate, Dr. Palmer, and his gruesome picture of the treadmill at work amounted to a full-scale assault upon the emotions of the British people. It had the desired effect, strengthened by the fact that the enquiry into its veracity concluded that William's account was substantially true. (4) According to Dexter, Baptist minister at Stewart Town, the findings of the Commission had a salutary effect upon the local plantocracy. (5)

1. Sturge, J., Harvey, T. The West Indies in 1837 Lond. 1838 161-162
2. Williams, James. Narrative of Events since 1st April 1834 Lond. 1837
3. Letters of Sturge to Clark at Brown's Town Regent's Park College Oxford
4. Report of Evidence op.cit.
5. Baptist Magazine 1838 134

There is an interesting conclusion to the Williams saga: Sturge informed Clark that Williams' notoriety in England had had an adverse effect upon him, and added "I hope not permanently injured his character..." he implied that Williams was quite content to be feted as a novelty, with no effort or intention of ever doing any work again; therefore he was sent back to Jamaica where, says Sturge, "he is less likely to attract notice in Kingston". (1)

It must not be assumed that all estates were run in the same manner as that of G. W. Senior, there were a number of estates where the relationship between master and apprentice was cordial, unfortunately, there were too many who sought, in the words of Professor Hall "to squeeze the last juice out of compulsory labour". (2)

Two factors seem to dominate the whole of the apprenticeship period, namely, wages and punishment. On these two issues the relationship between slave and master centred. An anonymous letter writer described the attitude of some of the Negroes: "Massa, they say, tink we fools, tink we no wish to get money; but Massa, him always talk about de work but never about de pay; ~~make~~ we see de money, den him see de work." (3) The question of wages brought fear to the planters and hope to the apprentices, while the matter of punishment increased in its severity - Sir Llewellyn Woodward's statement that "the bad treatment of negroes in the prisons of Jamaica had nothing to do with the apprenticeship...." (4) is not borne out by the evidence. The excessive punishments meted out during this period once again provided the psychological dynamic which helped the abolitionists to press for the final emancipation of all the Negroes earlier than had been planned for.

Hardship and unbelievable cruelty took place during this period, and it was in the attempt to relieve the apprentice of as much of the new burden as possible that the Baptist missionaries, in particular, played a very important part, seeing that justice was done both in word and deed. It would not be too much to claim that their interference, time and again, saved the lives of many apprentices, and even helped to

1. Sturge to Clarke, Letters. Regent's Park College, op.cit.
2. see above, 143
3. Baptist Magazine 1835, 69-70
4. Woodward, op.cit. 372



prevent a more terrible revolt than that of 1832. Knibb wrote to Dyer in January 1835:

Through great mercy we are all well, and matters are quiet, which would not be the case were not the negroes the most patient people on earth. Oh! this thrice cursed apprenticeship! nothing but blood, murderous cells and chains! I think nearly forty young and old females pass my door in chains every morning. Not one school is yet established, whilst most abominable cells and treadmills are being erected all over the island! This is to prepare the poor things for freedom! You tell me to be quiet; and I am; but if I were home, I would publish what I know as far as I could travel (1)

Knibb drew attention to the fact that this was supposed to be a time of preparation for freedom; Tinson also reported that at Yallahs, in the parish of St. David's, there were 7,000 apprentices without a single school of any description. (2) Could it have been that the plantocracy were hoping that the Negroes would prove unable to shoulder the new responsibilities inherent in freedom, and that the lack of preparation was yet another form of pressure to ensure their servitude? If so, once again they revealed how little they knew of the Negro, or even the incentives to freedom.

Much of the tension and the resultant brutality centred about the interpretation and the outworking of the new laws; what were the rights of the planters and the Negroes? Both groups sought to interpret them in ways most favourable to themselves, with the planters having most of the advantages, while the Negroes relied more and more upon the missionaries and upon the few conscientious magistrates.

Now that the slaves had officially more time to earn money, new problems arose for the planters: the need to discipline the ex-slaves to work on their plantation during the 13½ hours of freedom for the estates needed all the labour time they could get to ensure production, and this the slaves knew well. In the early days, cases were reported of slaves refusing to work during their free time, they either cultivated their own provision grounds, or hired themselves to the highest bidder. Through experience, gained on both sides, the end of 1834 and the early

1. Hinton, op.cit. 228. Burchell, op.cit. 295-296. It is noticeable in Knibb's letter that Dyer seems to have slipped back again into the old attitude of political quietude.
2. Baptist Magazine 1835, 113.

days of 1835 saw some improvement in this situation. It took all the skill and the energy of the conscientious magistrate to ensure that both sides were being fairly treated. Some of the planters, however, tried various ways of ensuring that the slaves either worked for them or had no time to work for anyone else, not even for the cultivation of their own provision grounds.

The law had stated that the apprentice should work  $40\frac{1}{2}$  hours per week, but did not make any ruling as to how that period was to be divided. It had been hoped that it would be worked in nine-hour shifts, this would leave the Negro all Friday afternoon as well as the Saturday to employ himself as he wished. There were those who argued that the  $40\frac{1}{2}$  hours were to be worked at the convenience of the owner, and several made their slaves work eight-hour shifts; whilst this meant a shorter working day, it also meant that the Negro was robbed of his Friday afternoon, because of early nightfall, it was much too dark for him to work on his own crops at the end of the day. Added to this, some of the owners made sure that the apprentices lived a distance away from his place of work, making it impossible for him to cultivate his own land. On those estates where the concern was to make the most of the Negro whilst they had him, the planters did all they could to stop his two sources of income, hoping that the Negro would feel compelled to remain on the estate and work what little time he had left.

Not a few of the apprentices found that they could earn more money from the sale of their produce than from the wages offered by planters; naturally, they were not too eager to work the extra time on the plantations. Magistrate Langrisshe reported that in his own district of Clarendon:

I have been frequently told by the negro, that he made more money by working his own ground than any sum of money his overseer or manager would give him; this is evidently the case in Clarendon. Four paths market is well stocked every Saturday with the finest provisions. They will not refuse their manager to work occasionally in their own time, but they prefer being paid the time back again in money. (1)

The money earned by the apprentices was used in two ways, both disturbing to the plantocracy. The money was used either to buy land in readiness for the time of freedom, or to purchase their own freedom

before the official date of 1840. Great concern was expressed at the rate at which the land was being bought up by the Negroes. One land owner wrote that he had sold to a Head Constable 100 acres at £4.10s. an acre, and that he had been offered £5 per acre by another three of four people, for another 100 acres. (1)

One of the reasons for this eagerness to purchase land is intimated in Sturge and Harvey's report, in which they tell of some overseers on the Cranbrook and Blenheim estates who threatened the Negroes that when they were free they would have to pay very high rents. It was a constant fear on the part of the Negro that he would be left homeless, and these fears were not imaginary. (2)

As the years of Apprenticeship went by, the problems increased instead of decreasing. While the apprentice could now earn more money for himself, his owner also found another way of making money out of him, it was to make him pay an exorbitant price for his freedom. Between January 1829 and 31st December 1830 slaves were gaining their freedom for prices ranging from as low as £5 to sums as large as £300. The prices demanded after 1834 certainly do not compare with the highest demands before 1830, but neither were the lowest demands anything comparable to the £5 asked during the earlier period, the later prices averaging between £35 and £111.2s.3d. The whole matter of estimating the value of a slave was in the hands of any two magistrates and one justice of the peace: they met together to attempt to come to an agreement, but it was seldom that the three could ever agree as to what was a fair evaluation. (3)

The Jamaica House of Assembly passed a law that was designed to stop the increasing number of apprentices from buying their freedom; Knibb reported to Dyer that

The law made here, and now in operation, is a most abominable infringement upon the abolition act. That was bad, this is worse. I pray God that it may be disallowed. Apprentices are now valued higher than when slaves. One named Baily, from Georgia estate, who was nearly flogged to death during Martial Law, paid £75 currency for his term of apprenticeship last week...the fact is that, under

1. Hall, Apprenticeship, op.cit. 8
2. Sturge and Harvey, op.cit. 208
3. Hall, Apprenticeship, op.cit. 10-11

the abolition act, they were purchasing themselves so fast that this law was made to stop them. This is the third time the law has been altered unfavourably to the apprentices. How can the poor things be expected to understand or to relish such changes, and all for the worse. (1)

It was not unknown for the planters who had succeeded in gaining a verdict against a slave to demand that the punishment should include extra work time, as well as the whip or the treadmill. The increase of unjust punishment brought the missionaries and the conscientious magistrates into direct conflict with the estates, and both missionaries and magistrates reported the events in their correspondence home. Knibb had experienced once before the advantage of making known publicly the sufferings of the people, and he was one who advocated that the Abolition Society send out some observers who would report on what they found, arguing that it would have a salutary effect upon those magistrates who organised their trials for the benefit of the planters. (1) Phillippo busied himself at this time with letter writing, one of his letters was read in the House of Lords and it is believed that it influenced Lord Sligo, who had been replaced by Lord Mulgrave as Governor, to release all his own apprentices, appointing Phillippo and two others to see that this was carried out. (2) Phillippo carried out his own research programme concerning the actual punishments which were being administered in the name of justice; the facts were disturbing:

During the first year of the apprenticeship, upwards of 25,000 punishments were adjudged in various parts of the island, and in the first eight months of the second year 27,000 more were recorded. During two short years.....60,000 apprentices received in aggregate one quarter of a million lashes, and 50,000 other punishments by the tread wheel, the chain gang, and other modes of legalised torture. But for the influence exerted by the Government, the missionaries, and some of the special magistrates the exasperations produced by these enormities would, in all probability, have broken out in open and general rebellion. (3)

Such reports reaching England stimulated the visit of Sturge and Harvey, resulting in a corroboration of that which the British Government already knew through the reports of the magistrates and the letter of

1. Hinton op.cit. 228
2. Underhill Phillippo op.cit. 125-126
3. ibid. 147

the missionaries. It is interesting to note that Sturge was accused by William Hankey, the owner of the Arcadia estate and himself a committee member of the London Missionary Society, of being "more indebted than you care to acknowledge to Knibb". (1)

In 1836, Sir Lionel Smith had replaced Lord Mulgrave as Governor, and he soon gained the reputation of being too friendly towards the Negroes and Dissenters. In an attempt to ascertain the truth, he set up several Commissions to examine the alleged atrocities, one such inquiry took place at Brown's Town and St. Ann's Bay in 1837 and was conducted by George Gordon, J.P. and John Daughtry, Special Magistrate. These two men had the task of examining witnesses to discover the truth behind the accusations implicit in the James Williams Narrative of Events. In the course of the inquiry John Clark, Baptist minister at Brown's Town, was questioned, and it was shown that it was Clark who helped Sturge to purchase the freedom of Williams and take him to England. Clarke was also responsible for at least one other inquiry into the abuses of the Abolition act. (2)

By the beginning of 1838 the Baptists were pressing for complete emancipation, and presenting a very strong case for such a step. A letter was sent to the House of Commons, signed by eight of the Jamaican Baptist missionaries, the burden of the letter was a two-fold attack; fear of further revolt and, the most persuasive of arguments, that there were signs on several estates where the owners had accepted the position, that reasonable profits were being made. This argument was put forward by Tinson in a letter to Sturge dated January 2nd, and in another dated February 6th 1838:

If we are to judge the future from the spirit which has prevailed in our legislative body during its late session, nothing will be done to prepare the apprentices for freedom, but almost everything to sour their tempers and unsettle their minds. I would have laws, and have them enforced, but let them be such as shall restrain and punish the guilty, not oppress the innocent.....We shall wait with no small anxiety to hear the result of your efforts in Parliament I believe it is the general opinion of all who think soberly on the subject, that it would be best to put an end to the apprentice-

1. Letter to Joseph Sturge Esq., In answer to his statement relating to the Arcadia Estate in Jamaica. William Hankey Lond. 1838
2. A Report of Evidence taken at Brown's Town and St. Ann's Bay under a Commission from His Excellency Sir Lionel Smith. Jamaica 1837 Baptist Magazine 1836. 506, 1838, 27.

ship in August next. I heard a gentleman assert this yesterday - a man who has been longer in the country than I have and who has many thousands of pounds at stake, one too, who must not be charged with 'craft' for nobody suspects him of the guilt of being pious - he is a man that does extensive business with persons in the country - he says he knows from the state of his trade, that the Negroes, as a body, are wiser and better than ever they were. (1)

Knibb was as busy as ever with his pen during this period, and there was every need for him to be so, for it would seem that the B.M.S. accepted the idea that the system was working well; not all had been as perceptive as James Cropper when it came to recognizing the fundamental weakness of the whole system. Nevertheless, impassioned letters like the following from Knibb, were pouring into the country, spelling out the weakness in simple and vivid terms:

I am in a land of half freedom, where there is much that is pleasing and much more to annoy.....We need only perfect freedom to make the Colony prosperous. This must come, and the sooner the better. I bless God for what has been done, but I do not like the apprenticeship system because it is unjust; yet it is not slavery and must issue in freedom. I do all I can to prevent oppression, nor do I stand by any means alone; but do it I will, if I should stand alone. I have told the magistrates respectfully, but firmly, that let the consequence be what it may, no one shall oppress my people with impunity. (2)

Even the Anti-Slavery Reporter for July 1836 presented a favourable report on the Apprenticeship system, taking a consensus of the islands in which the system was operating, it may well be that the other islands had found the right method of working out the system, but this was far from true in Jamaica. An editorial in the Baptist Magazine for 1836 indicts the system as operating in Jamaica on seven accounts:

- (i) Disallowance of stipulated supplies of food
- (ii) Refusal of medical aid to children born free
- (iii) Depriving mothers of time to attend to their children
- (iv) Sending of mothers to the treadmill for being late through feeding their children
- (v) Compelling the apprentices to work eight hour shifts instead of the nine hour shifts
- (vi) Corruption of many of the Courts
- (vii) Attempts to deprive the Apprentices of their free time. (3)

It was natural that the missionaries so closely involved with the actual outworking of the system and its abuse should be amongst its

1. Rawson Papers, op.cit.
2. Hinton op.cit. 239. Baptist Magazine 1837, 516
3. Baptist Magazine 1836, 542. see also Hall Apprenticeship op.cit. 25 for a further description of weakness of system.

most outspoken critics. They pleaded with the authorities to free all the apprentices, they also pleaded with their own people to do the same. Knibb wrote to Sturge asking if he would plead with Lord Sligo to release his apprentices, Knibb set the pace:

I have to convey the pleasing intelligence that the poor members of my church who hold apprentices have resolved, one and all, to set them free on August 1st and that the manumissions of most are already in my possession. I requested each of them to make it a matter of prayer; and when the result came I wept for joy. Not one held back....I have been to several persons in the town, and have succeeded in obtaining the manumission of eight to ten more, and I am trying the interest others in the matter....(1)

In another letter to Sturge he wrote that:

One old female gave up 7 her only support....about 40 have to receive their freedom in Falmouth, most from members of the church, and some from the magistrates and other members of the town. (2)

August 1st 1837, before 3,000 people, Knibb publicly announced the freeing of those apprentices held by members of the Falmouth Church, much to the annoyance of the 'Colonial party'. (3) There is a tangible illustration of what this event meant to Knibb, in the Church Record Book at the Falmouth Church it has, at the top of each page where once it used to read 'Owner's name', a hole neatly cut through, to erase the offending heading; it symbolised the moment when Knibb could say that there were no members of his Falmouth Church who were slaver holders. Burchell and Phillippo, too, were able to record similar events. (4) Other likeminded people followed, John Stainsby, rector of Lucea, was described as being 'worse than a Baptist'. (5)

We must not draw the conclusion that the missionaries spent all their time during this period acting as spies and recording atrocities; together with many magistrates they certainly maintained a careful vigil on behalf of the apprentices, while providing the Anti-Slavery Society with first-hand evidence, as witness their letter to the House of Lords on November 17th 1837. (6) During this time, also, they began some of their most creative work in the realm of social developments: education, wage negotiation, and the all important establishment of the free village

1. Hinton, op.cit. 241

2 Rawson Papers, op.cit. 15th August 1837, 12th September 1837

3. ibid.

4. Hinton, op.cit. 241-242. Burchell, op.cit. 331-332

5. Sturge and Harvey, op.cit. 236

6. Baptist Magazine 1837, 591-592

system.

That such a system as the Apprenticeship scheme could not last much longer the House of Assembly sensed, and was so afraid that the British Government would step in and pass a law restricting their powers even further that they passed their own act in aid of the Emancipation Law; this Act in Aid was designed to make the general condition of the apprentices much better, with the compulsory provision of medical care on all estates where there were more than sixty apprentices; it also made obligatory appointments of cooks and water carriers for gangs. (1) This sudden change of heart was too late, for the British Government was already preparing to pass the very act the Assembly feared. This, of course, did not pass through the Commons without some protest, whilst Sir George Strickland proposed the Abolition Act in 1838, supported by Lord Howick, the proposition was opposed by W. E. Gladstone and Sir George Grey. The opposition based its case on contention that the plantocracy were being deprived of their legal right to the remaining years of the labour provided by the apprenticeship, it was a plea for the exacting of the last ounce of work from their property. The motion of Sir George Strickland was carried with 269 votes to 205, a majority of 64. (2)

With effect from August 1st 1838, all apprentices were to be free. But the definition of that freedom had still to be worked out. To this task the missionaries lent their energies, realising that their definition had to be fashioned out of the very situation in which they found themselves; idealism from England was of little value, insight born out of their personal involvement was to be their primary source.

1. Hall, Apprenticeship op.cit. 26-27
2. Knowsley Pamphlets. Speech of the Rt. Hon. Viscount Howick on Sir G. Strickland's Motion for the Abolition of Negro Apprentices. Lond. 1838  
Speech on the Motion of Sir George Strickland....by W.E.Gladstone  
Speech of Sir George Grey Bt.....for the immediate Abolition of Negro Apprentices



### 3. Free Villages

Three years before emancipation became a reality James Cropper expressed his fears that "the planter will have some contrivance, either by vagrancy act or some other means to continue their oppression".(1) By what means Cropper reached this judgement does not matter, for it proved to be accurate. Because of a complete lack of understanding and a pathetic mishandling of the immediate post-emancipation, the planters unwittingly made possible one of the important developments in Jamaican history. The one thing feared by the plantocracy came into being, a new social order within the existing structure, namely, a new peasantry which could exist apart from the original structure.

Of this new social development, the Jamaican historian Hugh Paget has written:

The present social structure of Jamaica does in fact date from that period; the people had taken the first and most important step towards becoming a real community. (2)

The rapid development of this new social phenomenon affected not only the economic growth of the island, but also brought a new dimension to the political and social condition as well.

New townships were created by the Jamaican authorities at Seaforth and Altamont, in order to facilitate the immigration programme pursued by many of the planters; but these townships had no resemblance to the 'free villages' rapidly spreading throughout the island as a result of missionary enterprise. The situation in Jamaica provided each church with an opportunity to work out some definition of freedom and social righteousness. Freedom was understood by the Baptist missionaries to mean the right to live and enjoy ordinary human privileges, it also included the responsibility to see that others enjoyed this freedom, too; it demanded a responsibility to the whole of society, to be evidenced by moral standing and conscientious industry: the free village system was to be an experiment in such a concept of freedom and social righteousness. (3)

In India as early as 1796 William Carey had been faced with the changed social status of his converts, and found it necessary to create

1. Cropper letters, op.cit. August 22nd 1835

2. Caribbean Quarterly Vo. 1 No. 4, 1950, 7-19. Paget H. 'The Free Village System in Jamaica'

3. See below p. 298-300

a settlement for those whose conversion to Christianity enforced them to become tribal and national outcasts, therefore Carey was forced to provide a place for both church and factory at the centre of community life, a contrast to that which was happening in Britain where a struggle for predominance was taking place. (1)

In Jamaica, of course, the Plantation had always been the centre of the community, but with the coming of emancipation the plantation could no longer claim that position. The situation, therefore, offered great scope for the development of townships sponsored by the missionaries, with their twin focal institutions, the church and the school. These new communities engendered new identities and created a new sense of independence. In the van of such radical social developments were to be found many of the Baptist missionaries, for the very good reason that this was a practical demonstration of their doctrine of the church.

It must be readily acknowledged that these townships grew out of necessity and fear; just as fear had caused the plantocracy to abuse the apprenticeship system, so the same fear drove the ex-slave to seek his own property where, free from the fear of eviction, he could establish his own family life. Dr. Eisner rightly suggests that

Knibb's aim was to create complete villages - later known as the Free Village System. His original object was not the creation of a self-sufficient peasantry but rather to prove a solution to the hardship caused by the planters' attempts to exert extra labour by charging exorbitant rents against wages. By providing him with a small freehold the settler could go to any estate he pleased to work, and to return to his home and family when he had fulfilled as an hireling his day's employ....(2)

Money was a major factor in the tensions between the planter and the Negro; attempts to coerce the Negroes to return to the plantation failed, the problem was put succinctly by Sir Charles Metcalf:

It naturally became the interest of the owners of properties to obtain labour on the cheapest, and that of the labouring population to sell it on the dearest terms; and a struggle between these opposite views commenced between the two parties. (3)

Planters were finding the shortage of money an embarrassment, for they could not meet the demands for payment by their labourers. The

1. Potts, op.cit. 42-43

2. Eisner, G. Jamaica 1830-1930. A Study in Economic Growth. Manchester 1961, 211

3. cited in Sherlock, op.cit. 73-74. Hall, Free Jamaica op.cit. 159

proprietors once again blundered in their attempts to force the Negro to stay on the estates; instead of a cowering return to the plantation the planters were met with a new tenacity on the part of the Negro population; they were not prepared to be free in name only, but demanded to act and live as a free people. One of the important aspects of freehold was its security value, as Underhill learnt from conversations with Negroes during his visit in 1859, and with this security there came a new dimension to independence. (1)

Many of the planters thought that by robbing the Negro of his primary and independent source of income, namely his provision grounds, he would be enforced to accept the patronage of the estate: but in reality such action only served to provoke the slaves to seek independence in the Free villages. Governor Metcalf wrote to Lord John Russell in 1849 telling him of the rapid progress of these new communities, that between 1838 and 1840 the numbers of Negroes living in such communities had risen from 2,014 to 7,848, while Knibb tells that the census taken in 1844 reveals that this figure had risen to 19,000. (2)

Unfortunately, the architects of emancipation had not been very explicit in the important matter of the relationship between the planter and the Negro. This omission is well illustrated by the fact that the question of rents was a cause of a great deal of unrest during the early days of emancipation. It was generally assumed that the Negro would be allowed a three months' tenure of hut and land after August 1st 1838, in order that he would be able to harvest his crops and be able to reach some wage agreement. The Governor, when faced with this problem of rents, consulted the Attorney General of Jamaica, Dowell O'Reilly, who gave as his considered judgement that the Negroes were liable for rent from 1st August. Not only did some of the planters demand rent for a hut, which in all probability had been built by the Negro, but demanded also rent from every occupant over the age of twelve. One magistrate reported that

in nine cases out of ten the whole family had to give three days labour, and to make up the deficiency if any of them had happened to be ill, before the 1s. 8d. a day was paid for Thursday and Friday; an instance occurred where rent charged at a rate of £8.13s.4d. per

1. Underhill, E.B. West Indies op.cit. 265-266

2. Parry and Sherlock. op.cit. 196-198

annum was charged for a hut which was scarcely worth the odd shillings, and £17.6s.8d. for two acres of land, the annual value of which was not more than £2....many complaints of labourers credited with 5s. a week in wages who were charged 8s. for rent - a demand which established a new slavery of debt....(1)

Rents tended to exceed wages and on at least one estate the rent was twenty shillings per week, albeit the wages paid were only one shilling and eightpence per day. (2)

Joseph Gurney in his A Winter in the West Indies described in some detail the pressures brought to bear in not a few instances:

In case of any misunderstanding between the overseer and the labourers on the subject of the work, either as to its duration or price, threats of ejectment have followed. These threats in many cases have been put into forcible execution. Cottages have been unroofed and even demolished. Cocoa-nut and bread-fruit trees have been cut down; provision grounds have been despoiled by the hand of violence, or trodden under foot of oxen; and thus the labourers have been driven to seek for themselves a new home either by moving away to other properties, or by purchasing little freeholds in the neighbouring mountains. We often heard of these instances of violence, and saw something of them, yet I would charitably believe that they have been comparatively rare. Not so the plan of doubling or trebling the rent, or even multiplying it fourfold, upon arbitrary decision of the employer, or of charging it per capita against the husband, wife and each of the children, as a penal exaction to compel labour....Sorrowful to say, this plan has been practised through the length and breadth of the island. (3)

The work of establishing free villages began as part of missionary enterprise and served to illustrate the depth of their involvement: it began with Phillippo who formed Sligoville as the first of the free villages; Underhill, Phillippo's biographer, described the events leading to Sligoville:

Early in 1835 he purchased twenty-five acres of land, which were afterwards increased to fifty, in the mountains above Spanish Town, in the first instance to form a mission station. It now became the nucleus of a settlement....When purchased, the land was an unreclaimed wilderness. It was covered with masses of rock and with rank luxuriance.....The first building erected was a chapel and a school-room under one roof. It was begun in the month of October in 1835.... About two months before the proclamation of entire freedom, the first lot of land was purchased by Henry Lunan, formerly a slave and a head-man on the Hampstead plantation adjoining. The remainder of

1. Mathieson British Slavery op.cit. 309-310
2. Long, op.cit. 27-28
3. Gurney, J.J. A Winter in the West Indies; described in Familiar Letters to Henry Clay of Kentucky. Lond. 1840. 101-102.

the land was rapidly bought by the apprentices of the neighbourhood, and on 12th July 1840 the settlement was formally opened by a religious service in the chapel. The township then contained about 100 families but when all the purchases had built their houses and entered upon their tenancies they would increase to 200. Though surrounded with many difficulties incident to the first settlement of such a spot, there was every prospect of a prosperity as conducive to the interests of the colony as to those of the labourers and artisans themselves all of whom gradually found employment at moderate wages on the properties around. (1)

Once Phillippo had ventured into the 'real estate' business he continued at a surprising rate: there are at least six free townships which owe their origin directly to him, Sligoville, Sturge Town, Kensington, Clarkson Town, Kitson Town as well as Porus, together with several villages which he helped to bring into existence.

Such enterprises were costly and the B.M.S. was far from wealthy; much of the initial capital came from friends in England, especially the Quakers Cropper and Sturge. Lord Olivier's statement that Sturge was not enthusiastic about such a scheme needs qualifying, (2) for though he did express some doubts on its desirability to John Clark of Brown's Town, he seems to have quickly changed his mind, for by 1839 he wrote again to Clark:

I will mention to thee, confidentially, that some of us are trying to get up a little plan for the purchasing of land, for the establishment of free and independent negro villages, and if thou canst look out, without appearing to do so, for good spots for this purpose where land can be purchased on favourable terms I shall be obliged to thee. (3)

Meanwhile, on 15th November 1838 Cropper wrote to Sturge:

I think it right for me to give countenance and support to this plan of the West India Land Company, though there may be difficulties yet to remove; and will therefore put my name down for five shares being a responsibility of £1250, and I intend to remit the deposit tomorrow. (4)

Out of déperation, the now impecunious planters struggling to avoid bankruptcy and total ruin were prepared to sell land, as Professor Hall has indicated:

We find freehold settlements growing rapidly in those districts where abandoned estates are being put up for sale and where estate

1. Underhill, Phillippo op.cit. 183-184

2. Olivier Blessed Island op.cit. 299-300. Richards, op.cit. 201

3. Richards op.cit. 1961

4. Cropper letters op.cit.

owners are selling idle acres in order to raise money to invest in a more intensified agriculture based on machinery and fertilizers and less on labour. (1)

John Clark's letter dated March 18th 1841 gives some idea of the problems involved in the buying of land, as well as giving some new insight into the reactions of both planters and ex-slaves to the new situation:

Although I involve myself in difficulties in procuring land for the people, I cannot regret it when I contrast the state of the people in this neighbourhood with that of those in other parts of the island where land could not be procured. We have had very few instances of tyrannical conduct on the part of the planters; if any occur the people have the remedy in their own hands. There is enough labour in the market. I have no complaints against the people, they are labouring steadily and diligently. Many are rising in respectability, some cultivating their own freeholds, and other managing small properties for others. The desire for religious knowledge has not diminished....(2)

Visitors to the island wrote home impressive reports of the way in which the Negroes were adapting themselves to this new freedom and responsibility of creating a new society; Gurney gave a glowing account of Sligoville, (3) while James Chandler reported in his Journal that the village started by Burchell at Bethelhill was experimenting with such crops as tobacco and ginger. Burchell himself made a profit of approximately £70 sterling, cultivating plantain and coco on just an acre of land. (4)

The majority of missionaries who became involved in the free village enterprise did so at the request of the Negroes themselves, who were unable to buy single plots of land for the planters were only prepared to sell off large quantities, and were more ready to sell to non-coloureds than to the coloured and Negroes, hence the plea to the missionaries to buy up land and re-sell. There were those in England who saw this new enterprise as a positive contribution to the future of Jamaica, men such as Charles Stovel who encouraged Knibb, whilst in England, to buy land and re-sell it to the Negro at a reasonable price for, he argued, "sell them at a little, not much above the cost price, and create as many freeholders among the people as shall constitute a revolution in Jamaica". (5)

1. Hall Free Jamaica op.cit. 18

2. Richards, op.cit. 196

3. Gurney, op.cit. 115-116

4. Candler, J. West India: Extract from Journal of John Candler Pt.11  
Lond. 1841, 32-33

5. Payne Freedom in Jamaica op.cit. 59

Knibb needed no encouragement in this work, although he did not always stop to ask if there was money available to purchase land: he wrote to Hoby that he had purchased 500 acres at £1000, requesting Hoby for £500 or £600 loan. (1) It was not uncommon for B.M.S. headquarters to receive a letter telling them that he had sold all his furniture to raise the money necessary to purchase land. (2)

Apart from Phillippo, Burchell started villages at Bethel Town, Mount Carey, Knibb at Kettering and Hoby Town, John Clark at Wilberforce and Buxton, John Clarke of Jericho at Victoria and St. Thomas in the Vale, and the Alps and Calabar were started by Dexter. (3)

It is important to note that there were those planters who saw the growth of townships as both inevitable and beneficial, even to the point of co-operation in the new project, as John Clarke of Jericho illustrated when he reported that one grateful proprietor provided the land for a proposed village to be called Ewarton, providing also the site for a Baptist chapel. (4)

Other missionaries followed the lead of the Baptists, the Methodists the Presbyterians and the Moravians, so that a considerable community of new peasantry throughout the island grew sufficiently to make a marked impression on the old social patterns of the island. In the first place there was the development of the 'new Jamaican', a new and important social group, which, according to Hugh Paget, began "the foundation of the structure of a free and homogeneous Jamaica community....". (5) In the second place, it did not take long for the missionary and the planter to recognise the political importance of this new group, though it was some little time before this new political freedom now open to the Negro was able to operate with any decisive force. (6)

One of the immediate problems was that of immigration, again the offspring of plantocratic fear, fear that the plantation would be left without labour and thus atrophy as an economic force in the island's affairs. The immediate result of this attempt to ensure a labour force was disastrous; though it no doubt did have a considerable influence on the future compo-

1. Hinton, op.cit. 299-300

2. ibid 301

3. Underhill, Phillippo op.cit. 188

4. Baptist Magazine 1839, 451

5. Paget, op.cit. 19

6. see Curtin, op.cit. 98

sition of the island's inhabitants.

Immigrants were encouraged from Europe and bribed with the offer of the best land in the cooler parts of the mountain districts. Many of the immigrants were brought in by individual employers on a bounty system, while others were induced by the Government to settle in new townships. The whole system was doomed to failure for the very simple reason that the Jamaican Legislature was in no position to ensure that the scheme worked; they neither had the money nor the accommodation to ensure that it was a viable proposition. (1) The British Government were divided on the matter though, in the main, they accepted the thesis that this was the only way to solve the Jamaican estate problem, it was argued by the majority that thirty-five to fifty thousand immigrants were needed - at the same time the Irish question was looming large on the British political scene, the need for labour in Jamaica was seen as a wonderful opportunity to ease the Irish situation, and not a few Irish immigrants were found stranded in Jamaica. The minority group in Parliament under the leadership of Lord Howick argued that the planters could ease their situation by reduced expenditure, better and more economical cultivation, experiments with new products such as silk, cotton and tobacco, and a wise and just system of legislation and administration of the laws. (2)

This situation produced many social problems dealing with human suffering, and once again it was left to the missionaries to bring some sanity into a dangerous atmosphere. In his newspaper The Missionary Herald and Friend of Africa Knibb made appeals for money to enable the Irish immigrants in particular to return home, while John Clark, writing in the same paper, described it as a "White Slave Trade". (3) The Baptist concern for the immigrants seems to have won some sympathy from Sir Charles Metcalf who, despite being most suspicious and cautious when it came to dealing with the Baptists, ordered an inquiry into the conditions of the European immigrants. (4)

One other small, though not unimportant, difficulty arose during the early days of emancipation, namely the shortage of doctors; many left

1. Morrell, W.P. Colonial Policy of Peel & Russell Lond. 1830, 157

2. *ibid.* On the whole question of Indian and African immigrants see Hall, Free Jamaica op.cit. 55 ff.

3. June 9th 1841. December 9th 1841

4. Hinton, op.cit. 405-414



the island believing that after emancipation there would be no future for them, by the 1860s there was only a quarter of the doctors practising in Jamaica compared to the number there prior to emancipation. (1) The sick, therefore, were left to the mercy of anyone with sufficient interest and concern for the Negro, which meant that once more the missionary had yet another responsibility added to his already excessive work-load. Burchell started what must have been one of the first free medical centres in the colonies; having taught himself chemistry whilst at college, together with a smattering of medical training provided in the course given for missionaries at the Bristol Academy, he began to tackle this new and increased problem as his brother indicates:

As the miseries of the apprenticeship system developed themselves, and his members in the country suffered from its cruelties, his medical practise gradually extended. And when at length a debilitated constitution compelled him to seek a residence among the hills, Mount Carey assumed the character and importance of a dispensary in relation to the surrounding districts; as many as from two to three thousand of the coloured peasantry annually receiving gratuitous relief. The obtaining of medicines from England, however, in requisite quantities, became too expensive; hence he further turned his chemistry to account, by making his own resins, tinctures, etc., even this outlay was heavy, amounting in the latter period of life to nearly £160 per annum....The knowledge then acquired he now employed in the practise of surgery to some extent; and occasionally used the knife. To assist him in the dressing of wounds, he took to his house, from time to time, several orphan children of his members, whom he trained to that beneficial service, in which they showed much expertness. (2)

Judgement on the overall effect of the free villages and the new peasantry is somewhat divided, as seen in the two major works on Jamaica, Philip Curtin's Two Jamaicas and Douglas Hall's Free Jamaica. Dr. Curtin's argument is that the rise of the new peasantry created a new Jamaica which never really became part of the old Jamaica; he says

While the planters were struggling with the estates, the Negroes were building a second Jamaica in the hills, and building it in their way with little European guidance. Although the economic decline was always in the background, neither the rising at Morant Bay nor the planter's surrender that followed was primarily an economic failure. It was, instead, a social and political failure, and its form was the full grown 'native problem' posed by the second Jamaica of small settlers. (3)

1. Curtin, op.cit. 160
2. Burchell, op.cit. 303-304
3. Curtin, op.cit. 157

Professor Hall, while accepting that the existence of the new peasantry made vital changes in the old structure, does not accept that there was a 'second Jamaica' in existence, rather was there a gradual fusing together of the two aspects of the whole life of the island:

There was a large class of small farmers, grown up for the most part since emancipation and now an important social and economic group in the island. The peasants and labourers, with many continuing disadvantages in secure land tenures, soil deterioration on their holdings, less opportunity for estate employment, and a lack of the most necessary social services could, nevertheless, show their great contribution in the establishment of interior towns, villages and market-places. Whatever had been lost, these things, and their freedom, remained basically secure. (1)

On balance, the evidence seems to support Professor Hall's thesis that the free village system and the establishment of a new peasantry were not divisive factors, but developed into a consolidating factor; this is certainly what Knibb, Burchell and Phillipppo sought to do in their enterprise, to bring about a free and unified people.

During all these activities, there remained two other areas of social activity which were vital for the future of Jamaica and, therefore, need to be dealt with separately, namely Labour Relations and Education.

1. Hall Free Jamaica op.cit. 264

#### 4. Labour Relations

The struggle to establish the right relationship between employer and employed was a constant one, the suspicion that existed between the two distinct social groups was clearly marked during the period under review; even as in the mother country open revolt was always a possibility.

There was a sense in which Adam Smith's laissez-faire represented an academic abstraction, it was all very well to argue a theoretical case for buying in the cheapest markets of the world in order to sell in the dearest, (1) but at some point someone has to stand the loss, and this was usually the workers. It is indeed difficult to persuade men whose capacity for production increases, but whose wage packet grows smaller, in spite of rising profits, to accept Smith's plausible but very dubious argument that the rich, even though concerned about profit, divided the produce of the improvements with the poor; therefore, "they are thus led by an invisible hand to make nearly the same distribution of the necessities of life, which would have been made had the earth been divided into equal portions among all its inhabitants". (2) Individual prosperity and national prosperity may very well be linked, but it would take an exceptional act of credulity on the part of the weaving communities in the Cotton and Woollen areas of Lancashire and Yorkshire during the first half of the nineteenth century, to accept that they were getting a fair share of that prosperity; the individual profit seemed to relate to one class only, the owner, whilst the national profit seemed also destined for the same class.

In a plantocratic society such as Jamaica, the question of labour relations had hitherto been non-existent, the planters had been able to manipulate their property at will; the introduction of apprenticeship, however, had put a brake on this situation and had reduced the master's authority to a degree. Now that this situation was changed, the Negro was grudgingly given the right to live as a human being; new concepts had to be learnt by both sections of the new society, and one of the most important was that contracts and agreements, which hitherto had

1. Smith, A. The Wealth of Nations Lond. 1895

2. cited Briggs, op.cit. 12.

been one-sided, now meant a two-sided affair, a new experience for both parties. Here then lay the root cause of the immediate problem: neither side was prepared for the new situation which demanded the hon-ouring of agreements.

In fairness to the missionaries, and to Knibb in particular, they attempted to prepare the Negro for this situation. Knibb, during the apprenticeship period, uttered some of his finest statements, revealing how quickly he had grasped the seriousness as well as the tremendous potential of the opportunities being offered to the island. He continually emphasised a 'responsible independency', pointing out that what they achieved then, affected not only the present Jamaica, but the Jamaica of the future:

You will shortly, my friends, be released from your present state of bondage. In the course of a very few weeks you will receive the boon of freedom. I would therefore impress deeply on your minds the necessity of your continuing the cultivation of the soil, on the receipt of fair and equitable wages. I am not aware of any complete scale of wages having been drawn up; but I have been on ten or twelve different properties, I have conversed with several proprietors, and I am glad to say that, with some of them, there appears to be a disposition to meet the changes fairly and honourably. Those who are more conversant with figures than I am will be able to show what the owner can afford to give for the cultivation of his property; in the meantime I would say to you, Do not make any hasty bargain. Take time, consider the subject; for it is one of vital interest and importance to all. If you demand too high a rate of wages, the proprietor will be ruined; if you consent to take too low a sum, you will not be able to provide for the wants of yourselves and families. In making your arrangements, if there be any attempt to grind low, resist it by all legal means; for you must consider that you are not acting for yourselves alone, but for posterity.....You must work for money. You must pay money to your employers for all you receive at their hands. A fair scale of wages must be established, and you must be entirely independent..... Receive money for your work; come to market with money, purchase from who you please; and be accountable to no one but that Being above who, I trust, will watch over and protect you. I sincerely trust that proper arrangements will be made before the first of August....I desire to see you fairly compensated for your labour; I desire also to see you performing your work with cheerful industry; but I would again warn you not to be too hasty in entering into contracts. Think seriously before you act; and remember, as I have already told you, that you have now to act, not only for yourselves, but for posterity. (1)

Part of the problem lay in the fact that while men such as Knibb sought to prepare the apprentices for the new situation, in the main the

plantocracy seemed impotent of ideas concerning the future save of those designed to return to the status quo.

Knibb was not alone in this work of preparation, Samuel Oughton wrote on June 26th 1838 that his time was fully occupied in assisting local managers in fixing scales of wages, while Phillippo, on July 7th, stated that a number of the local planters had submitted to him, for his comments, their proposed scale of wages. (1)

After August 1st 1838, Knibb was amongst the first to negotiate wage agreements, (2) no doubt as Anton V. Long suggests "his own working class background probably opened his sympathy for the labourer". (3) His statements reveal a much deeper concern for justice rather than a simple struggle for a particular class; certainly his own background would enable him to appreciate the problems more clearly than he might otherwise have done. He understood with clarity that an advantageous wage structure was essential and important, for, as Tinson pointed out, the whole cost of living was rising rapidly; keeping the Negro on a low wage with the rising cost of living meant reducing him to starvation, and this could lead to yet another explosive situation. Tinson listed some of the economic realities which faced the 'new Jamaican' who hitherto had not had to manage his own affairs:

Many of the poor suffer greatly in general sickness: having a horror of doctor's bills, as well they might, they are afraid to call in a medical man. Many articles, too, are much dearer now than formerly: wood, for which we used to pay 10d. we now pay 1s.0½d; coffee we formerly bought for 7½d. or 10d. we now pay 3s. 4d. and the same with many other things. (4)

It was a situation which challenged Knibb in a way that released his capacity for negotiation, hitherto unsuspected, during the days of the apprenticeship; he was a hard and relentless negotiator, but was always aware of all sides of the issues involved. Sir Lionel Smith thought Knibb too adamant in his claims, and feared that he would damage his case, but Knibb, whilst recognising that different plantations must of necessity offer different wages structures and that each case had to be fought on its merits, was not prepared to accept that all plantations were so

1. Baptist Magazine 1838, 446

2. Clarkson, T. Not a Labourer Wanted for Jamaica Lond. 1842. Clarkson acknowledges Knibb's skill in this field.

3. Long, op.cit. 46

4. Baptist Magazine 1840, 159

poor that they could not afford to pay for the labour given. He was quite prepared to compromise, as is seen in the case of the Oxford estate, the first in which he was able to help make a wage settlement. He had already argued that two shillings and sixpence should be a minimum, and had said "if the attorney will offer one shilling and eightpence per day with house and ground, or two shillings and sixpence without, I should say accept the offer" (1) whereas, on the Oxford estate, he felt it necessary to accept the shilling offered. He was deeply concerned that the new element of the two-way contract be understood and adhered to; he was not opinionated enough to think that all the trouble came from the planters; after the Oxford estate settlement, a number of Negroes argued that Knibb had made a bad agreement, when the internal labour trouble began, Knibb went to the workers on the estate telling them in no uncertain tones that "YOU have made the bargain, and if you do not keep it, I will never help you make another". (2)

His belief that the Negro was a responsible person became almost an obsession with him; he constantly argued that, given the chance, the ex-slave would make a vital contribution to the life of the island. This he illustrated from the activities of one of his members, showing that freedom, instead of encouraging the Negro in his mythical laziness, gave him an incentive to greater activity:

I had a member of the name of Hamilton, who the moment he was made free, set up for himself, and became a road-maker. He took a contract, and paid his workmen 10d. per day more than the white said their labour was worth. I made out his accounts; he brought me the money, and when he had paid his men one shilling and eightpence a day, he himself cleared 12s. sterling per day for his work. Would he have been a wise man if he could continue working for a master at a shilling per day, when he could get 12s. by working on his own account? (3)

The other Missionary Societies seemed more reluctant to enter into such negotiations; the Methodists, held back by their Standing Orders, when confronted with such wage bargaining attempted to remain neutral, and would only enter such discussions with the consent of both parties. The Scottish missionaries, however, took a more decisive attitude to the

1. Hinton, op.cit. 285-291

2. ibid 295. also Exeter Hall Speech 1840

3. Hinton, op.cit. 355-356

question of wages, and were clearly more pro-worker than were the Methodists. (1)

There were, of course, proprietors who, accepting the inevitable, managed very well without the aid of the missionaries, as in the case of Charles Royes, attorney on the Seville Estate in St. Ann. Royes offered generous terms to the Negroes who were assured of regular payments every Friday evening; this also ensured that there were little, if any, labour disputes, as well as setting a good example for others to follow. (2)

Involvement in the wage problem was inevitable for Knibb and his fellow Baptists. They saw in the struggle for fair wages and better labour conditions a fundamental aspect of the foundation material upon which the new Jamaica could be built. It would seem that Knibb was one of the first to see the need for a new understanding of emancipation and its implications; a complete new concept of freedom had to be worked out at the grass roots, it could not be done by remote control from Britain or any other country. Labour was a fundamental problem which had to be tackled; the Baptists were amongst the first, if not the first, to recognise the problem and attempt some kind of a solution to it. (3)

1. Curtin, op.cit. 114-115
2. Hall Free Jamaica op.cit. 50-51. Gurney op.cit. 99-100
3. Catherall Foundations op.cit. 354-355

## 5. Education

On the principle that an educated Negro was likely to demand freedom, education for the Negro in Jamaica had been practically non-existent save for the attempts of the missionaries, and this only on those estates of the more enlightened planters.

The few white children on the island were also victims of this misguided attitude to education, therefore schools were low on the list of the local Government's priorities. Leslie, writing in his New History of Jamaica in 1740, summed up the situation during the early part of the eighteenth century, and which continued to exist in the first part of the nineteenth century:

Learning is here at the lowest ebb: there is no public school in the whole island, neither do they seem fond of the thing: several large donations have been made for such uses, but have never taken effect. The office of teacher is looked upon as contemptible and no Gentleman keeps company with one of this character; to read, write, and cost Accounts is all the education they desire, and even these are scurvily taught. A man of any parts or learning that would employ himself in that business, would be despised and starve. The Gentlemen whose fortunes can allow it, sent their children to Great Britain, where they have the advantages of a polite and generous education. (1)

Attempts, however, were made to provide some educational facilities on the island as early as 1694, when one Robert Waite left a sizeable bequest which was left dormant for over sixty years and was eventually used to endow the Ally School in 1755, as well as the Manchester High School: while in 1736, Wolmer's High School was started on the strength of a legacy of some £2,360 left by a Kingston Goldsmith, for the founding of a free school. (2)

Maria Nugent, wife of the Governor (1801-1805) at the beginning of the nineteenth century, indicates that there were some well-meaning people in England who, from time to time, sent out books specifically for the education of the 'poor children'; her somewhat cryptic remark "Alas, they can be of little use to us here" indicates the disdain with which education was regarded. (3)

Attempts at education, no matter how well-meaning, suffered from

1. cited in Mozely, G. edit. Letters to Jane from Jamaica 1788-1796. n.d. 15 see also Gordon, S.G. A Century of West Indian Education Lond. 1963 for an excellent survey of educational development.
2. Black, op.cit. 186 ff.
3. Wright, op.cit. 140



a fundamental weakness, namely that it was the product of an alien culture, another attempt to impose Western ideas upon the Negro population. Though the British had been in the island since the middle of the seventeenth century, it could not be said that they had understood the West Indian culture; rather had they attempted to turn the island into a little England, creating a culture which was untrue to both the British way of life and the Negro. There was an attitude in Britain which saw the West Indian slave as something lower than a human being, and the American slave as at least a degree higher in the scale of creation than his West Indian counterpart, which is well illustrated by a remark of Mrs. M. O. W. Oliphant who, in her review of a biography of Livingstone, suggested that it is only the institution of slavery which has produced "the gay, merry, thoughtless, inconsequent Sambos of the American plantations or the indolent and insolent drones of the West Indian islands". (1)

The result of this patronizing attitude was two-fold, there was either complete apathy towards education on the part of the Negro who could see very little point in schooling, or it produced an imitative trait. With the classics, scripture and some mathematics as the basis of education, one could hardly expect a boy who had become proficient in such disciplines to want to stay and do manual work, or even to learn a trade which would have provided a much needed sector for the Jamaican society; Professor Gordon's comments concerning the nineteen twenties and the thirties reveal the dimensions of the legacy of need left by earlier administrations:

In the nineteen-twenties and thirties there was a consistent attempt by the colonial authorities both to improve a lamentably poor educational provision and to shift the emphasis from wholly bookish studies to scientific, technical and practical studies....there was much educational activity in the West Indies in the century after emancipation, but....it largely failed. This was not only because there never was adequate provision for everyone, but also because there was seldom a coherent idea of what public education was intended for, beyond establishing limited personal status for a minority..(2)

Meanwhile, the missionaries geared their educational policy to their evangelisation, though it was hoped that as a by-product there would be "more influential support in the community". (3)

1. Blackwood's Magazine Vol. 83, 1858, 399. See also Paterson, op.cit. for a study of the general attitude of colonizers to Jamaica.
2. Gordon, op.cit. 5-6
3. *ibid.*

It seems unfortunate, but inevitable, that there was no united educational policy adopted by the missionary societies: each Society, once established, was very much an entity in itself, with only the occasional fraternisations, but on other occasions there was definite rivalry, especially when it came to obtaining grants for new school buildings!

One of the most important educational developments in the West Indies was the Mico Trust, set up with money left by Lady Mico in 1690, money which was originally intended for Lady Mico's nephew, who was to inherit £1,000 on condition that he married one of Lady Mico's six nieces. For reasons best known to himself, this did not happen; nevertheless, his aunt had not been unmindful of this possibility, making provision in the will that in such an event the money was to be used to aid the "poor slaves" in Algeria. By 1816 Algeria had been captured and all the slaves freed, so that the money was left to accumulate interest to the sum of £120,000 by 1827. So large a sum lying dormant was a problem until Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton in 1834 proposed that the money be used to develop education in the British Colonies. The basis of the Trust was religious, but fortunately free from denominational strictures, its regulations were simple and uncomplicated:

- 1) All schools to be supported in whole or in part from the funds of this charity, shall be open to children of parents of all religious denominations.
- 2) The grand object of this Charity shall be the promotion of education in general, but especially of Religious Education - the basis of the system to be the Holy Scriptures...
- 3) No catechisms or books of peculiar religious tenets shall be taught in the schools, but every child shall be at liberty to attend regularly the place of worship to which his parents belong.
- 4) No teacher to be employed who does not bring satisfactory recommendations as to his religious and general character and competency as a school Teacher, his efficiency to be approved of by the Agent of the Trustees with whom shall rest his removal should it be desirable to do so. (1)

One of its greatest contributions was the establishment of a college for the training of teachers, and in fact this set the pattern for the four women's training colleges at Shortwood, St. Joseph's, Bethlehem and Moneague. (2)

1. Gordon, op.cit. 27-28 for the work of the British and Foreign School Society see below p. 261-263
2. Black, op.cit. 189

Prior to emancipation, Baptists were slow to move in the establishment of schools, even though they were probably the first Society to send a full-time teacher, namely Thomas Knibb, to the island. It was, of course, true that John Rowe commenced a school, and that Le Compere began an important piece of work at East Queen Street, which was developed by James Coultart, but it was not until the arrival of Phillippo that any other serious attempt at establishing a school was made; Phillippo's own experience may explain why his colleagues did not embark so readily on such a programme:

On or about the 5th May I established a private school and a Lancastrian School. The one for the education of scholars in the higher departments of elementary knowledge, classical and literary, admitted on regular terms (of payment), which was conducted by myself. The other for the gratuitous instruction of children of the poorer classes, slave and free. On the first public advertisement of my purpose, and for months - I may say years - the press poured out torrents of abuse from day to day, attributing to me the basest motives, and as acting under the influence of a psuedo-philanthropic crew who sought aggrandisement of themselves....(1)

Dr. May Reckord's judgement that missionary schools were politically motivated (2) is in line with Professor Gordon's suggestion that missionary education was concerned to establish influential leadership, while the following report of a visitor to Phillippo's school emphasises the ability of the Negro to imitate the white child and be his equal, which could well be accused of being propaganda:

In the science of geography and astronomy the whole school appeared enthusiastic; the whole world, as it were in a moment, was divided into continents, islands, oceans, seas and lakes: zones, longitude and latitude, the twelve signs of the zodiac, motions of the earth and its distances from the sun, were all described with the expertness and accuracy I could scarcely have believed. Upon the whole, it far surpassed all I ever saw in England. (3)

This report elsewhere illustrates Miss Gordon's thesis that the educational system was wrongly structured. Certainly by the 1830s this kind of education was limited in the main to the middle class, especially favourable to the 'free coloured' who were prone to imitate the white man, and longed to enter more fully into his world.

1. Underhill Phillippo op.cit. 47-48
2. Reckord, op.cit. 184
3. Phillippo Jamaica op.cit. 194

Post emancipation saw an acceleration of educational work amongst Baptists. During the apprenticeship period, the tremendous increase in church building and church membership made necessary a more realistic educational programme. Knibb, for example, had argued that schools, not treadmills, were the best preparation for emancipation. (1)

The missionaries were not alone in recognising the vital role of education in the development of Jamaica: the British Government was concerned to do something to facilitate a more peaceful transition to freedom than hitherto had been the experience, they therefore offered a substantial grant to the missionary societies for their school building programme in 1835, tacitly accepting that it would be the missionaries who would have to bear the brunt of this work. (2) Two years later, the Government sent one of their inspectors, J. C. Latrobe, to report on the first two years' work under the Negro Educational Grant. The report presented a sense of disappointment, especially that the hoped for partnership between Church and Government was not working out: indeed, it was Latrobe who reported the inter-church rivalries over grants for school buildings. The dismay was such that by 1841 the Government felt compelled to stop the grant, much to the dismay of the Mico Trust who had the largest commitment of any body concerned; (3) though the British Government justified their action by saying:

Adverting to the improvement which has taken place in the condition of the Negroes since the date of their emancipation and to the substantial advantages which they now derive from the social position to which they have now attained, Lord John Russell looks forward with confidence to their being able soon to provide for the education of their children without the aid which is now specially voted by Parliament for that purpose. (4)

It is at this point that we can detect one of the factors which enabled the Baptists to make their remarkable acceleration in their school programme, as Latrobe pointed out in his report:

The Baptist Missionary Society is understood to entertain the opinion that funds raised by it for missionary purposes, or specifically for the preaching of the gospel among the heathern, cannot be consistently devoted to the purposes of education, and consequently the individual missionaries have been thrown almost wholly

1. Hinton, op.cit. 228

2. Gordon, op.cit. 22.

3. *ibid.* 39-42. Baptist Magazine 1838, 121-124

4. *ibid.* 38

upon their own resources for the prosecution of their schemes for education of the coloured classes. The energy, perseverance, and devotion of time, means and strength, by which these extensive plans have been brought to bear, are well calculated, in each instance, to excite respect and admiration. (1)

This gives point to Dr. Eisner's comment that the Baptist record of school building during the apprenticeship period and the early post-emancipation years was much better than that of other missionary societies. (2)

Latrobe may have over-emphasised the B.M.S.'s concern for preaching rather than teaching - or, at least, if this was so then it was a new feature, a change in attitude from the days when they were prepared to send out teachers; perhaps the real reason for the misunderstanding is to be found in the fact that the Society was financially embarrassed, and its membership strongly attached to the 'Voluntary System'. (3) In spite of the not infrequent outbursts against educational grants, printed in The Baptist Herald and Friend of Africa, Phillippo did not quibble in 1835 when accepting a grant of £500 towards the completion of his schoolrooms, readers of the Missionary Herald were given the news in enthusiastic terms: "we learn with satisfaction, that the Government have made a grant of £500 towards defraying the balance due on this useful and much needed erection". (4)

Accepting the 'Voluntary Principle' saved the Baptists from being dependent upon the Government grant, it saved them also from the bickering over school buildings mentioned by Latrobe, and when the Government stopped the grant in 1841, James Stephen, the Permanent Secretary to the Colonial Office, wrote to say that the Baptists were able to cope with their educational work in a manner equal to, if not better than other denominational bodies without contribution from the state. (5)

It is refreshing in the midst of denominational wranglings over education to read a brief report from John Clark of Brown's Town, who in February 1837 wrote "We have a school in the town in connexion with the Mico Charity...." and later in May he further wrote "we do not feel it our duty to establish a day school at Brown's Town, as there is a

1. Baptist Magazine 1838, 122-
2. Eisner, op.cit. 327
3. Underhill Phillippo op.cit. 277-278
4. Baptist Magazine 1836, 37.
5. Gordon, op.cit. 39

a Mico School already in the town, which is judiciously conducted". Though in 1840 he wrote of a church school with 1500 children and several hundred adults under instruction, which indicates that there had arisen the need for further schools in the town. (1)

Adhering strictly to the 'Voluntary Principle' placed a heavy burden upon the missionaries as well as the Society at home, for despite their general policy not to support direct educational work they could not ignore the phenomenal growth of schools under the leadership of their agents. Once again they were indebted to men such as Cropper and Sturge who, together with many likeminded people, formed the Jamaica Baptist Educational Society. The Society's report for 1841 reveals how effective it had become. (2) The statistical report printed in the Baptist Herald and Friend of Africa on March 17th 1841, gave the state of the schools belonging to the Society for the period 1840. The total Day schools then established were 56, with 6,961 attending; evening schools were 11, with a total of 407 in attendance, while the Sunday schools totalled 54 with 11,875 students. There were approximately 90 teachers connected with the society; of these schools no less than 24 were started during the apprenticeship period and 1837 seems to have been the year of the greatest acceleration for, out of the 24 schools, 14 of them were started in that year. (3)

It says much for the insight with which Phillippo prepared his own educational programme, for he sought to prepare the Negro for his new role as a citizen. Underhill says of Phillippo's educational work that it was seen primarily "as an invaluable instrument in the elevation of the people, and as necessary, to prepare them for freedom." (4) Hence Phillippo attempted to introduce a programme of technical education. He advertised in a Spanish Town newspaper on March 3rd 1839 that he proposed to establish "A School of Industry" and offered courses in tailoring, shoe making, saddlery and basketry; it failed, as did a similar course set up by the Government in Spanish Town between 1848 and 1852. (5)

In 1835 Burchell began the first serious educational project in the county of Cornwall, he and Knibb sharing the training of the teachers.

1. Baptist Magazine 1837, 227, 325. 1840, 385

2. ibid 1837, 546-548

3. Catherall Jamaican Emancipation op.cit. 160

4. Underhill Phillippo op.cit. 47-48

5. Collected papers of Phillippo B.M.S. Archives. Gordon, op.cit. 170

In 1836 his school at Montego Bay needed extensions to cope with a new infants' school, while in Mount Carey he built a school to seat 200; this plus the 1000 at Montego Bay and other smaller outstations gives some indication as to the magnitude of the tasks undertaken by the missionaries, especially when one considers that men such as Burchell paid as much as £500 per annum out of their own resources. (1)

The reason for the acceleration in the educational programme of the Baptists becomes clear when we recognize that the missionaries were beginning to understand that they were dealing with the future of Jamaica and not simply present needs: they were dealing with the needs of a new society. It is true that there were strong denominational and evangelistic motives, this was to be expected, yet this did not blind them to the fact that education involved the whole of life and the well being of the nation, both economically as well as spiritually. Leaders needed to be trained, this was an urgent problem within the church as well as within society, as John Clarke of Jericho stated clearly in a letter dated 13th April 1837:

I hope God will raise up pastors for the churches he has formed; and so supply his people with a better opportunity of learning his will than they at present enjoy; while instead of pastors being in all the churches, one pastor is under necessity of breaking the bread of life to so many. We cannot always look to England, yet it is lamentable indeed to think of present prospects here. A very common trait in the character of the natives, who have some knowledge is that they so soon stop short; and think they know much, while they know next to nothing. I have long looked with anxiety and prayer to members of our churches, who appear to bid fair for some degree of usefulness in the vineyard of our Lord; yet have seen but two whose humility and disinterested zeal would encourage the hope that they might be usefully employed in assisting the minister .....but we cannot push forth to this great work men who are not qualified, either by character or talents, for so awfully responsible and highly important work....(2)

Training naturally began in the local church, some of the churches were anxious that a programme of definite training for pastoral oversight be commenced, as was Burchell's church at Montego Bay which asked that part of Burchell's week be taken up with training men to assist in the work of the church. (3) However, something more than local training

1. Burchell, op.cit. 302-311
2. Baptist Magazine 1837, 422
3. Burchell's Letters B.M.S. Archives

was needed, and this need was met by the formation of Calabar College in 1843. Though Underhill credits Knibb with the idea of Calabar as a preparatory college for the sending of men to Africa(1) it is most probably the result of the growing sense of need being experienced by most of the missionaries. As early as 1837 Phillippo wrote to London requesting the setting up of a college for the training of a native ministry, while in 1838 Knibb wrote to Dr. Hoby on the same matter and in 1839 the Committee accepted a resolution in favour of such of college. To Knibb was given the task of seeing the building through the various stages of erection. (2) After delay over the actual location of the college, it was finally opened at Calabar, Rio Bueno, on October 3rd 1843. The first principal was Joshua Tinson, he, together with ten men, formed the first theological college for the training of a Negro ministry in the Western Hemisphere. In spite of the adulatory remarks concerning the brighter students in Phillippo's Metropolitan School at Spanish Town, the general educational standards of Tinson's students did not reach a very high degree. Of his early students he wrote:

They have everything to learn and this has rendered my labours heavy, both from the elementary nature of the instruction I have had to give and the frequency with which it is necessary to impart it. I usually have the whole of them four times a day, so that it keeps me pretty closely confined....(3)

The defects of the educational system in the island were to cause those embarked upon such a venture as Calabar many serious problems, invariably their students came unprepared to commence theological training at any advanced level; though Underhill notes with satisfaction the steady rise in the quality and ability of the student body in Calabar, in his Report on the Calabar College in 1860 he still decries the defectiveness of their pre-college education with typical nineteenth century loquacity, "the miserable patois of the slave had to be exchanged for euphonious and grammatical English". (4)

The Baptist Church in Jamaica owes an enormous debt to the men whose vision and tenacity brought the College into being. Fifty years after its commencement David East, the second Principal, writing in The Voice

1. Underhill West Indies, op.cit. 292-293

2. The Baptist Quarterly Payne E.A. 'William Knibb to Charles Stovel' 114-116 Vol. XIV No. 3, July 1951

3. Payne, Freedom in Jamaica op.cit. 109

4. Underhill West Indies op.cit. 296



of Jubilee stated:

Fifty years ago, it is to be feared, that in some parts you might have searched in vain for a single God-fearing praying Christian man. What is the case now? Why, to say nothing of other Christian denominations, there are now in connection with our mission upwards of seventy regular organized Christian churches, comprising more than 30,000 members, presided over by one and forty Christian pastors, of whom nineteen are men of your own clime....who are all black and coloured men, all except two educated at your institution at Calabar. (1)

Phillippo was even more ambitious and suggested a University in Jamaica after the model of University College, London. (2)

This emphasis upon training of a Native ministry and Native lay leadership was not readily welcomed either by the plantocracy or even by other religious denominations, for it had its obvious dangers. Such dangers had been illustrated by the 1832 revolt. The planters had a legitimate fear when they argued that the training of the Negro and giving him responsibility and authority as did the Baptists in their church life, could only lead to trouble. Always with this kind of responsibility and authority there is the danger of misuse of that authority. This danger was one that the Baptist missionaries were prepared to accept as a necessary part of their understanding of liberty. They also saw it as a necessary basis for the development of a nation if it was to grow to its full stature. Knibb's speeches to the apprentices reveal that he fully understood this, and just as he recognized that there were inherent dangers, these danger could not outweigh the importance of the individual personality in the creation of a new people. This emphasis upon opportunity for the individual to prove himself and to take leadership, which was at the heart of the message of Knibb, Burchell and Phillippo, was an essential factor in the development of the island into full nationhood, and was also an important contribution in the education of the ex-slave in his preparation for full citizenship.

1. Clarke, Dendy, Phillippo. op.cit. 9-15
2. Phillippo Jamaica op.cit. 212

## 6. Freedom with Problems

The long awaited day of Freedom arrived, and with it the celebrations, which were quiet and dignified, as on August 1st 1834. Maybe there was still some doubt in the mind of the Negro; he had tasted a qualified freedom before. It was inevitable that the shackles of slavery should leave a deep scar which no amount of talking about freedom, official or otherwise, could erase from his mind, the fear of an even worse fate. (1)

Nevertheless, August 1st 1838 was not a day of gloom; Phillippo described the event in the capital, Spanish Town, in his usual grandiose manner: "The whole island exhibited a state of joyous excitement as though miraculously chastened and regulated by the hallowed influence of religion". (2) It was left to Knibb to dramatise the moment: writing to his friend Hoby he describes the scene:

Never did I hear such a sound. The winds of Freedom appeared to have been let loose....At an early hour in the morning further proceedings took place, intended to be emblematical of the extinction of slavery. A hole having been dug in the ground attached to the Suffield school-room, a coffin also having been prepared, and the ordinary instruments of slavery - a chain, a whip, an iron collar &c. - having been deposited in it, a large concourse of person assembled between five and six o'clock, as for the purpose of celebrating a funeral. The coffin was then lowered into the hole prepared for it, the congregation singing the following stanza:

Now, slavery, we lay thy vile form in the dust,  
And, buried for ever, there let it remain:  
And rotted, and covered with infamy's rust,  
Be every man-whip, and fetter, and chain. (3)

Generally speaking, J. J. Gurney's comments, written in 1840, that the Baptists "are now reaping their rewards, in the devoted attention of the people" (4) with its implications of prosperity, were correct, but only for a very short period. This period of prosperity was tempered with attacks, both personally and denominationally, upon the Baptists. Within a short space of time one correspondent was writing that it was

1. Even in 1967, Martin Luther King could write "All too few people realise how slavery and racial segregation have scarred the soul and wounded the spirit of the black man. The whole dirty business of slavery was based on the premise that the Negro was a thing to be used, not a person to be respected." Chaos or Community Lond. 1969
2. Phillippo Jamaica op.cit. 174-187
3. Hinton, op.cit. 256-259
4. Gurney, op.cit. 127

once more the fashion to abuse the Baptists. (1)

Eight days after the celebration of emancipation, an effigy of Knibb was hung up in front of his church, its purpose was to incite the Negroes to armed reaction, which would have been the case had not Knibb calmed down the crowds. (2) Again, in February 1839, an attempt was made to discredit his reputation: a sailor named Thomas Jones was bribed by the editors of the Jamaican Dispatch to swear that Knibb was both a liar and a thief. The story was taken up in England by the paper John Bull; a Bristol solicitor, at his own expense, brought an action for libel against the paper and won the case, though the damages awarded amounted only to £70. (3)

Knibb was by no means alone in being made the target of personal abuse, Samuel Oughton, together with an Anglican clergyman, were both cited in a libel case, both men losing their appeal in court. (4)

In spite of their popularity with the Negro population, a large section of the plantocracy still regarded them with bitterness, and not a little jealousy, as the following extract from 'A Planter's Journal' shows:

Went down to Rio Bueno and got on board ship Hopwell where we mean to stop the night.  
Found the air on board the ship much more confined than on shore, as my part of the island is very high and consequently out of the way of the swamps - there were several people on board - of a curious class called Baptist - The appearance of their Archbishop Mr. Knibb is very disagreeable. A great fat, over-grown body, very restless, and a short quick manner, which has a degree of coarseness added to it, that rendered it very unpleasant. They say that first appearance goes a great way and most certainly it did not go much way with me as I thought he looked a common vulgar shop man.  
His brother whom I have the misfortune to have as a fellow-passenger was the lowest and most vulgar person I have ever met with - He was a shopkeeper in Liverpool, and coming out under the auspices of his brother....with the idea that they are coming out here as missionaries, most indeed all this sect came out without a penny hardly in their pockets - before three months have elapsed they are enabled to keep a carriage and horses, both for themselves and their servants. ....The missionary or Baptist person, more properly, that came out with us, came out with nothing, eight years ago, this last voyage he brought out a low-fashionable phaeton, which I saw myself, that could not have stood him for less than £80 or £100 sterling, and of

1. Baptist Magazine 1839, 621
2. Hinton oplocit 260-267
3. ibid
4. Baptist Magazine 1839, 512-516, 562

all persons who drive two-horse vehicles, and the best descriptions these persons are the ones - wealthy attorneys and even the few proprietors here, do not drive such good articles...(1)

Though we can discount much of what John Blagrove writes as the expression of embitterment and jealousy, with the lingering of the prejudice of class, (2) there is an element in his comments and observations that we cannot overlook: it is true that there were Baptist missionaries who were receiving stipends of between £300 and £400 from their congregations, (3) and were amongst the highest paid men on the island; yet Burchell was quick to see danger in this and wrote two letters home which ~~much~~ have caused him no little pain to have written. The first states that "Our mission is down in the estimation of all....there is at present no union of views and consequently little union of feeling or action - we are not what we once were." The second letter, written a little later in the summer of 1840, gives some grounds for the observations of Blagrove:

Those who have recently come out have acted as tho' they were influenced by any spirit rather than a Christian Missionary Spirit. I am not going to write a letter of complaint but to state the reasons for my not acting. It has appeared to me (I shall be glad if I am in error) that our more recent friends have been anxious to procure the most important vacant stations without regard to the destitute districts - Souls have been lost sight of too much - I have felt almost disgust at the grasping after the best stations - we had to work for them and I grieve to see these things. (4)

Burchell seems to be describing a danger to which any similar society is prone, as early as 1814 Carey pleaded with the B.M.S. Committee to tell missionaries designated for India not to expect to live and work in Serampore, but rather at the isolated mission stations.(5)

On the Government level the displeasure generated against Baptists, was seen in the attack upon them by the new Governor, Sir Charles Metcalf who, in his first report home, accused them of interfering in political issues, and being strongly anti-plantocratic. (6) It was rumoured that Knibb had been aiding the Hon. Richard Hill of Falmouth during the election of 1837, and Knibb himself attempted to enter politics on behalf of the small traders in 1840; he also established an Anti-State Church Convention,

1. Blagrove Journal op.cit.

2. for the general place of the shopkeeper in the British society see Kintson Clark op.cit. 121-123

3. Gordon, op.cit. 39

4. Burchell letters B.M.S. Archives

5. Potts, op.cit. 24.

6. Hinton, op.cit. 350

contemporary with the Anti-Establishment movement in England under the leadership of Edward Miall. (1) Metcalf was, of course, right, but what he did not seem to grasp was that the Baptists were only following emancipation to its logical conclusion, a completely new society. Freedom needed to be continually worked for, and this work was a combination of the spiritual and the political. These accusations angered Knibb; H. P. Jacobs shrewdly suggests that Knibb was annoyed because Metcalf was right, and that he had "laid bare another man's secrets of policy". (2) Knibb's anger was intensified when Lord John Russell, normally sympathetic to Dissenters, refused him an interview: Russell was no doubt influenced by Metcalf's report. This was a blow to Knibb and the missionaries back in Jamaica. The whole situation in the island was becoming very unpleasant, and perhaps the greatest distress was caused by the unfraternal attitude adopted by some members of the London Missionary Society, and members of the Presbyterian mission. The old accusations of laxity of church membership, and an avaricious attitude to the use of membership tickets were again raised, these matters were being debated in Britain as well as in Jamaica; one cannot but feel that the B.M.S. Committee in its reply to the accusations were right in their implications that jealousy was the motive behind the scandal. (3) Knibb naturally was angry at these continuous attacks on the integrity of the Baptist missionary, and answered them in a positive argument as indicated in his letter to Charles Stovel:

We are at peace here amongst ourselves though at war with all besides, and now that our Churches are multiplied, so that the numbers are better proportioned, while more errors are detected, more good is effected. Our schools too are beginning to yield fruit unto God. The Church at Falmouth has recently dismissed 300 of her members to form a new church and I expect to dismiss about 200 others to form or assist another church. This will make a 8th draft in 9 years, a very fair proof of the falsity of the charge that we grasp after the multitude to obtain their money....(4)

During this trying period three important events took place in the life of the Baptist Community in Jamaica. The first was the birth of

1. Ryall, op.cit. 210-216. Curton op.cit. 182-183. Hinton op.cit. 472-473
2. Knibb Memorial op.cit. 22
3. Baptist Magazine 1839 27-29. Hinton op.cit. 420ff. Knibb's Speech at the Exeter Hall 1842. Baptist Mission in Jamaica - A review Samuel Green Lond. 1842. Remarks of the B.M.S. Committee 1843
4. The Baptist Quarterly Payne 'Knibb to Stovel' op.cit. Vol. XIV No. 8 July 1951

the autonomous church, no longer financially dependent upon the B.M.S. It is still a matter of debate as to whether this was a wise policy or not. (1) No one can deny that at that period prospects seemed good, as well as the not insignificant fact that the B.M.S. itself was having financial difficulties, an experience shared by the Church Missionary Society, the London Missionary Society as well as the Methodists; (2) therefore, when the Jamaican church suggested this move it was accepted with a sense of relief. We can now, of course, wish that Phillippo's advice not to sever the relationship completely had been taken; nevertheless, this new adventure into independency made some mark upon the life of the nation. Knibb has been blamed for this step, but if any blame is to be meted out, then Burchell must take a major share, for it was he who seems first to have mooted the idea, Knibb following with his customary energy. (3)

The second event was the formation of the Jamaica Baptist Missionary Society, founded in 1842, after John Clarke of Jericho and Dr. Prince, a one time slave owner, volunteered to work in West Africa in 1840, a course for which Knibb pleaded during his second visit to England in 1840; this outreach movement gave the Jamaican Church a new sense of being free, free to work even beyond their own borders, which was of real import in their search for maturity. (4)

The final event was the establishment of the Calabar College, which has served the church in Jamaica and beyond for over a hundred years. (5)

Early in 1845 Knibb paid his last visit to Britain: not long after his return to his adopted land he died of a fever, on November 15th. Just a year later Burchell, too, this time in England, fell ill and died; thus ended a partnership which had contributed greatly to the history of the island. It was indeed the end of an era.

Their deaths posed a real problem for the Baptists who remained in Jamaica for they, and those who followed immediately, were not of the same calibre, even Phillippo who survived them by many years seems to

1. The Baptist Quarterly Vo. XXI No. 8. October 1966.  
Catherall G.A. 'Thomas Burchell, Gentle Rebel' 360-361
2. Warren, op.cit. 136-143
3. Burchell, op.cit. 363. Payne Freedom in Jamaica op.cit. 67-69
4. Baptist Magazine 1840, 603-605, 685. Hinton 360-366. Knight R.L.A. edit Liberty and Progress Kingston 1958, 33. Payne Freedom in Jamaica op.cit. 72-84
5. In 1967 Calabar amalgamated with the new Theological College of the West Indies.

have declined in stature; the deaths of Knibb and Burchell were untimely both for the Baptist mission and for Jamaica.

1. General Problems of the Colony in these two Decades

The death of Knibb and Burchell, and the removal of the Sugar Tariff in 1846, which drastically affected the Island's economy at a time when it could least afford such action, marked also the beginning of a period of decline amongst the churches in Jamaica, and none more so than the Baptists. Robbed of their two most influential leaders, and the financial security that had seemed so assured immediately after emancipation, the decline was rapid.

These two events proved fatal to the political influence of the Baptists, an influence which had developed under Knibb's leadership, (1) became almost non-existent, in marked contrast to the period between 1832 and 1845. It was a situation anticipated by Governor Metcalf in 1840 when, in his critical survey, he suggested that the political influence of the Baptists might decline on the grounds that the members would tire of having to pay for their religion; (2) the decline came, but not for these reasons. (3)

The loss of the kind of leadership hitherto given by Knibb and Burchell was felt most keenly when the local church had to contend with the problems resulting from the Jamaica Assembly policies, especially in the areas of education and the welfare of orphans. The problems of local Baptist life were aggravated by an increasing demand for autonomy by the local churches, consequently, there was a less spectacular involvement in the affairs of the island, the Baptists had to contend with increasing internal problems arising out of their relationship with the Baptist Missionary Society in London, and a steady secession to the Native Baptist Movement. Professor C. E. Carrington overstates the situation when he writes that the "powerful Baptist Missionary Society took the Native Baptists under its protection" (4) for there were not a few of the British Baptists in Jamaica who sought to deny any relationship between them. (5) Yet it could be argued that, accepting the complexities of the situation during this particular period 1845-1865, and the reluctance on the part

1. Long. op.cit. 44-55
2. Hinton, op.cit. 350
3. see below p. 249
4. Carrington, op.cit. 518
5. see below p. 248-249



of the churches to become as deeply involved as they might, one cannot but feel that the Native Baptists, representing the section of the community worst hit by the economic depression, took over the role played by the Baptist Missionary Society's agents in 1832, and precipitated the Jamaican Assembly into facing up to the situation, aided by Underhill and the letters of the Baptist missionaries. Perhaps their greatest crime lay not in the religious sphere, but in the political and moral sphere. It was not because they tended towards the enthusiastic, or even the religiously unorthodox, that they were feared, but having nothing to lose and everything to gain they were prepared to attack the social and political situation and reveal it for what it was. A modern martyr who died for a similar cause, Martin Luther King, writing about a modern Negro revolt, expresses what men such as George William Gordon must have felt in the 1860's: "years of humiliation, abuse and deprivation cannot be expected to find a voice in a whisper. The storm clouds did not release a 'gentle rain from heaven', but a whirlwind, which has not yet spent its force or attained its full momentum". (1)

This final section of a work dealing with British Baptist involvement in Jamaica is of necessity shorter, though none the less important, than the sections dealing with the period 1783-1846.

During the two decades 1846-1865, British politicians were pre-occupied with affairs much nearer home for the West Indies to command the attention they had hitherto enjoyed; there were the disruptive activities of the Chartist movement, the passionate campaign for the repeal of the Corn Laws, and the potato famine in Ireland, not to mention the revolutionary activities disturbing the peace of the European mainland, especially in France, Italy, Germany and the Balkans.

The era of peace and prosperity enjoyed by Britain was symbolized by the Great Exhibition of 1851 held at Crystal Palace yet, says Professor Asa Briggs, "there was a hollow note about most of this propaganda". The peace and prosperity depended not on the efforts of free trade, but on the success of the forces of counter revolution in Europe, (2) which eventually succeeded in 1854 in uniting France and Britain in war against Russia.

1. King, Martin Luther Why We Can't Wait New York 1863, 16

2. Briggs, op.cit. 376: for discussion of Crimean War see 376-385

Britain may well have been the 'work shop' of the world, but from a military standpoint she was exceedingly inadequate, and the eventual victory over Russia could not exonerate the military disasters. By the end of the war severe straining of the relationship between the allies occurred, and victory brought with it a renewal of the age-long Anglo-French hostility. (1)

Meanwhile, in spite of the many distractions, the politicians were turning their attention to matters of 'Empire', especially the important acquisitions which had been made in India between 1815 and 1870 - in 1858, just one year after the Mutiny, the East India Company finally passed their control of India over to the Crown. (2)

The neglect of the West Indies was so obvious, that George William Gordon, a leader of the Jamaican Native Baptist Church, wrote to Governor Eyre in 1862 complaining that British interest had become obsessed with Oriental conquests, and that the spirit which had brought about the emancipation of the slaves was on the ebb. (3)

It was a period of rapid growth in foreign investment, which drew British resources not only into the 'formal Empire' but into an ever widening area of the world; it was estimated that between 1815 and 1880 "over £1,000 million in credit had been accumulated abroad, no more than one-sixth of it in the formal Empire". (4) There was a slow but deliberate withdrawal of British protection of West Indian commodities, free trade had won over even the men who, according to Professor W.L. Burn, "had been almost professional advocates of emancipation, men who now found in the freest possible commerce a still higher morality", (5) and then demanded the abolition of protected sugar duties.

With so much occupying the mind at home, and the prospect of so much untapped wealth abroad, and with the emotive element taken out of the slavery issue because of its colonial demise, a statement in the Economist suggesting that the slave trade was "the only practical mode which has yet been discovered by which a communication can be opened and maintained between Africa and the civilized world" (6) brought forth no

1. Briggs, op.cit. 383

2. *ibid*, 390

3. Burn, W.L. The Age of Equipoise Lond. 1964, 84-85

4. Briggs, op.cit. 392-393

5. Burn, op.cit. 70

6. *ibid*, 90

stream of 'righteous invective'; which caused Leslie Stephen, an ardent abolitionist, to complain of 'complacent optimism'. (1)

It is little wonder that Sir Llewellyn Woodward, writing about Colonialism during this period, after briefly mentioning the British Government's threat to suspend the Jamaican Constitution during 1838-1839, should comment that "for the next twenty-five years Jamaican affairs were not a major issue in British politics". (2) As a result of the West Indies being relegated to the political backwaters, the local situation, especially in Jamaica, became increasingly chaotic. Mismanagement and the continuation of plantocratic rule, led the country to further trouble: the experience of 1832 seemed not to have had any lasting effect upon the Jamaican Assembly, save an increased determination to rule just as they pleased. Though slavery had been abandoned, this did not prevent them from applying the old attitude to almost all the affairs of state, and the old tensions between the British Government and the Jamaican Assembly, instead of being removed were increased by the obvious lack of interest on the part of the British Government. (3)

This political isolationism is evident in the steady economic decline which took place during this period. The rising cost of producing sugar in the British West Indies had been a vital factor in ending Colonial slavery, and this same factor was to create further difficulties in the British West Indies, Jamaica in particular. 1846 was the year when what incentive there was for experimentation on the plantations was destroyed. The British Government was under pressure from both the West Indies and the East Indies; and few weeks prior to the introduction of the Sugar Act the Government had accepted a repeal of the Corn Law, in fact "the plea for cheaper, if not cheap sugar, was almost as strong as that for cheap bread". (4) The Sugar Act of 1846 provided for the progressive equalization of the duties on British and foreign sugar, an Act which horrified the plantocracy who, after much debate, were able to persuade the Government to postpone the date of complete equality from 1851 to 1854. (5) The Act, however, brought great joy to islands such as

1. Burn, op.cit. 86-87

2. Woodward, op.cit. 374

3. Hall Free Jamaica op.cit. especially chap. 3 'Panic and Recovery' 81-120 for comprehensive survey of this period

4. Mathieson Sugar Colonies op.cit. 48. Briggs, op.cit. 312-325

5. Woodward, op.cit. 373

Cuba, where they produced quality sugar at a much cheaper rate than was possible in the British islands, a fact which had been clearly demonstrated during the Common's Commission set up in 1832 to examine the reasons for the revolt of that year. (1)

Having allowed Jamaica to become a monoculture, (2) the effect of the Act upon the island was traumatic; though sugar had been struggling for a considerable time, the island was virtually incapable of seeing any prospect other than a revival of the plantocracy, hence the demands for an acceleration of immigration. By 1850 the West Indies was producing about one ninth of the world's sugar, as against approximately one half in 1828. The sugar output fell from 1,363,963 cwts. in 1828 to 592,487 cwts. in 1850. (3) The number of estates, which had risen from 775 in 1772 to a peak of 859 in 1804, had dropped to 330 in 1854, (4) producing a dramatic decline in labour opportunities at a time when there was a plentiful supply of labourers. Phillippo recorded his observations of the current situation in his diary on June 29th:

since the passing of the emancipation Act, of the 653 estates then under cultivation in the island, 140 containing 168,032 acres of land, have been abandoned and the work broken up. They employed when in full operation 22,553 labourers. Many of the poor, who from 1838 to 1844 were paid at the rate of 1s.6d. per day, are now glad to be employed for sixpence. (5)

Coffee and indigo had been an important produce in Jamaica until the end of the eighteenth century, when sugar completely annihilated the indigo trade; coffee, however, was able to continue as a small but important industry but that, too, had to give way to the pressures of the mid-1850s and Jamaica lost the coffee market to Ceylon. (6)

Phillippo argued against the general tenor of Dissent that the cause of the economic decline lay in the British policy of free trade; however, what angered him most was the fact that the British Government, having abolished slavery in their own Colonies, were now quite happy to accept sugar from countries still engaged in slavery because it suited their own free trade policy. (7)

1. see above, p. 108

2. Ragatz, op.cit. 41

3. Hall Free Jamaica op.cit. 80-120

4. ibid.

5. Underhill Phillippo op.cit. 250

6. Underhill West Indies op.cit. 272-273. Ragatz, op.cit. 41

7. Underhill Phillippo op.cit. 150-151. Williams British Historians op.cit. 88

William Sewell, an American journalist who visited the island in 1859, perceptively reported in the New Yorker, after declaring that his previous anti-emancipation prejudice had been cured that

I know of no country in the world where prosperity, wealth, and a commanding position have been so strangely subverted and destroyed, as they have been in Jamaica, within the brief space of sixty years. I know of no country in the world where so little trouble has been taken to investigate the causes of this decline, or to remedy the evils that have depressed the colony. (1)

Sewell places great stress on the fact that emancipation was not the cause of the economic decline, as did another visitor to the island, the Rev. Dr. David King who, in 1850, wrote his book The State and Prospect of Jamaica: with appended Remarks on its Advantages for the Cure of Pulmonary Diseases, and Suggestions to Invalids and others going to that Colony. (2) Both men strongly denounced the current argument that if emancipation had not taken place the present problem would never have arisen. In fact, the evidence is strongly against such an argument, propagated as it was by the plantocracy, aided by the polemic of Carlyle.

The economic difficulties of this period were increased in the 1850s by drought and disease, diseases such as cholera, small-pox, measles and even influenza, as well as a not inconsiderable emigration of between 2,000 and 3,000 adults from the island for Panama to work on the construction of a railway across the isthmus; (3) all of which contributed to a depletion of the island's labour force, though this remained sufficient for the needs of the plantations had the whole matter been handled with a great deal more skill and diplomacy than it was.

During his visit to the island Underhill took what opportunities were afforded him to examine the effects of the economic depression upon both labourers and planters. In conversation with a Native Baptist at Old Harbour, he learned that labour was available in abundance, if properly paid; even in the face of unjust treatment, the natives would on no account go back into slavery. The wages being offered were far from being equal to what the people could earn from their own produce, and naturally this caused a reluctance to work on plantations, especially when one could never be sure of getting paid for the work done. (4)

1. Sewell, W.G. The Ordeal of Free Labour in the British West Indies Lond. 1861, 169-170. re-published in 1968
2. op.cit. Baptist Magazine 1850, 754-764
3. Hall Free Jamaica op.cit. 221
4. Underhill West Indies op.cit. 231-232, 264  
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The difficulties of the early 50's made the great dream of Knibb, as he outlined the possibilities of the future to the apprentices, seem but empty rhetoric. But on the contrary, according to William Sewell's observation, Knibb's view was now even more important; it was the failure to accept the soundness of Knibb's thinking that was behind the present difficulties. Sewell, therefore, stressed those very things Knibb had proclaimed twenty years earlier, as a basis for a new Jamaica:

...I came to the West Indies imbued with the American idea that African freedom had been a curse to every branch of agriculture and commercial industry. I shall leave these islands overwhelmed with the very opposite conviction....I hope to be able to show others as plainly as the conviction has come to myself, that disaster and misfortune have followed - not emancipation - but the failure to observe those great principles of liberty and justice upon which the foundations of emancipation were solidly laid... The people of Jamaica are not cared for; they perish miserably in country districts for want of medical aid; they are not instructed; they have no opportunities to improve themselves in agriculture or mechanics; every effort is made to check a spirit of independence, which in the African is counted a heinous crime, but in all other people is regarded as a lofty virtue, and the germ of natural courage, enterprise and progress. Emancipation has not been wholly successful because the experiment has not been wholly tried. (1)

Because of the cultural gulf still existing between the majority of the plantocracy and the peasantry, constructive thought about a united society was hardly considered. The shortage of work and of money to pay the workers, and the ravages of cholera, created an atmosphere of despair, giving the impression that the island was doomed.

It was inevitable that, in the wake of economic decline, there would be an increase in social problems, problems which had never been adequately dealt with by the British Government or the Jamaican Assembly at the time of emancipation: the House of Assembly, for the next twenty years until 1865, ruled in splendid isolation. Walter Dendy wrote bitterly in 1849 "Legislation in Jamaica appears almost a mockery" (2) Although during this period "Jamaican affairs were not a major issue in British politics", there was an attempt to denigrate the Act of Emancipation, led by the vociferous Thomas Carlyle in his An Occasional Discourse upon the Nigger Question, published in Fraser's Magazine for December 1849,

1. Sewell, op.cit. 177-179

2. Dendy Letters, Jan. 16th 1849, West India Reference Library, Kingston. all letters from this source will be indicated by name of sender, date and W.I.R.L.K.

which has more recently been described by Dr. Eric Williams in a bitter attack, as 'Neo-Fascist'. (1)

The labour situation on the island was desperate; significantly Ellis Fray, the Baptist missionary at Kettering, reported in December 1851 "We are passing through a great commercial and agricultural crisis, and what the end will be is hard for us to divine; but turn wherever you will at present, poverty and distress stare you in the face". (2) Dendy reported in November 1852 that "unless some scheme be devised for the resuscitation of agriculture, this part of the island at least will soon be brought to a state of desolation. (3)

The experience of bitterness was exacerbated by the outbreak of cholera during the 50's. J. E. Henderson, the missionary at Waldensia, reported that almost 200 of his church members died as a result of cholera, while in the district itself nearly 3,000 had succumbed to the disease: significantly he states that many died primarily through lack of nutrition, leaving them physically incapable of dealing with whatever disease might be rampant at the time. (4) At Salter's Hill Dendy reported that between January 1850 and February 1851 the church lost 178 of its members. Phillippo recalls in his diary on October 28th 1851 something of the sense of despair which prevailed at that time:

Sunday: went to prayer-meeting as usual. A large congregation... went to Passage Fort. Called at several houses. Saw several persons dead and dying. Called at the hospital and found more dead there, and the hospital in a filthy state. Preached to a thin congregation, owing to the great mortality in the neighbourhood. Called again at the hospital, and ordered a nurse to be procured. From thence went to Cumberland Pen; several cases of the disease existing, and several deaths. Kraal Pen had been in a dreadful state, but somewhat improving. The Farm Pen, the property of Lord Carrington, was rapidly decimating; several had been interred without coffins, and numbers were being taken with the epidemic every hour. I prayed with all the patients, and returned to town at dark. Preached in the evening to a large congregation. (5)

During the 50's and the 60's, the social conditions of the majority of the inhabitants of Jamaica deteriorated. With the economy undermined by the removal of British protection, and frequent droughts, at a time

1. Williams British Historians op.cit. Ch.4 'The Neo-Fascism of Thomas Carlyle'
2. Ellis Fray Letters December 9th 1851, W.I.R.L.K. Fray was a native of Jamaica, and a product of Calabar, also the son-in-law of Knibb, see Baptist Magazine 1866, 762
3. Dendy, November 4th, 1852, W.I.R.L.K.
4. Henderson, March 4th 1851, W.I.R.L.K. 5. Underhill Phillippo op.cit.257

when America was unable to supply her normal quota of foodstuff owing to the Civil War, the amount of food the small settlers could produce was drastically reduced; it was a period when the jails were filled, mostly with people convicted of crimes of larceny. (1) Summonses for debt "disclosed an amount of pecuniary difficulty never before experienced".(2)

There were those who read the situation and predicted disaster, but no-one in authority listened; the Stipendiary Magistrate for St. Thomas-in-the-Vale reported in 1854:

A general decadence prevails over the large properties and old establishments. On the other hand, the thousands of well-cultivated settlements, with their tastefully arranged cottages and gardens, which have given quite a different appearance to the country since August 1838, bespeak the prosperity and comfort of the occupants, and present a cheering prospect and an encouraging hope for the future.

At first, these settlements were sufficiently near the estates to enable the cottagers to labour on them, returning to their own homes every evening; a very important consideration in several points of view; but the abandonment of the estates has operated in two ways to prevent this; the labour is no longer required, and the settlements have become too isolated and far removed from cultivated estates. When we consider that the comparatively few large properties which are still upheld must, in the course of events, follow the fate of others which have been either abandoned or cut up into small settlements,....we cannot but foresee the rapidly approaching importance which must very soon attach to these small settlements and their yeomanry of possessors.....If ever there was a time when it was necessary that something should be done by a government for a people, this is the people, and now is the time. The country has hitherto done little or nothing or worse than nothing for them. (3)

This magistrate could not, of course, foretell the effect of the droughts upon the small settlements, which he rightly discerned as important for the well-being of the island, for even they were reduced to almost total ruin. There can be little doubt that much of the moral decline, and especially the rising rate of convictions for theft was, in the words of the Reverend H. Clarke of Grange Hill "due to lack of food". (4) There is evidence, however, that the charges of larceny, vagrancy and even starvation, were exaggerated during the early part of the 1850s. David

1. Jamaica Papers No.1. Facts and Documents Relating to the Alleged Rebellion in Jamaica and the Measures of Repression. Including Notes of the Trial of Mr. Gordon. Lond. 1866, 4
2. ibid
3. Augier and Gordon Sources op.cit. 227-228
4. Hall Free Jamaica op.cit. 197



East, now Principal of Calabar College, recorded his own observations on the social condition of the people in 1853, in which he attempted to give a balanced account of the situation:

My observation of the social condition of the people was anything but to justify the slanderous reports which you sometimes meet with both in Jamaican and English newspapers respecting it. Almost involuntarily I found myself ironically quoting the terms 'starvation', 'vagrancy', 'idleness', 'insubordination', which the enemies of the Jamaican peasantry have reproachfully applied to them. Do not listen to them: the charges alleged in such language are false and malicious. The planting interest is sinking; but the people are rising. Money is scarce with them; but they are amassing material wealth, and I have no doubt they will one day become the masters of the soil. They cannot endure the present burdens of taxation; and, I hope they will not; as I am sure they ought not. They have their faults; some of them are great and heinous; but they are greatly magnified on the one hand by those whose expectations of them exceed all that might be reasonably expected; and on the other hand, by those whose souls are sore vexed because they cannot worry and oppress them as once they were wont to do. For my own part, I never hear of a complaint which may not either be traced to the cruel system from which they were only lately liberated, or for which I cannot instantly find a parallel amongst men occupying the same social position in England. My recent travels along mountain passes and amongst mountain settlements have greatly raised my estimate of the people. Where, from the seclusion in which they live you might expect to find them in a state of semi-barbarism, I found them in comfortable homes decently clothed, and with well cultivated provisional grounds.....my indignation sometimes burns when I read the scandalous assertions with which the English ears are sometimes filled by a class-serving press. Tell our friends at home they are big black lies. The people are not starving; nor likely to do so. They are not vagrants; nor likely to be so. They are not idle, when they are properly remunerated for their labour. They are not sinking into barbarism, but rising in the scale of civilisation. (1)

Underhill reported during his visit to the island in 1859 that the prospects of the island "are improving". (2) Discussing the reasons for the religious revival in 1860-1861, Professor Hall points out that it is difficult to explain the reason for its beginning in the area of Manchester, which was a relatively prosperous parish of small settlers, where there were no sugar plantations. (3) But these observations do not imply that there was no problem, the areas of poverty, though widespread, were mainly in the plantation districts, (4) while the areas spoken of by David East

1. Baptist Magazine 1853, 479-480
2. Underhill West Indies op.cit. 183
3. Hall Free Jamaica op.cit. 237
4. Baptist Magazine 1865 464-471

were mainly small settlements. An example of the poverty in a plantation area was provided by the Underhill meeting which met at Spanish Town on 16th May 1865, they reported that there were in Spanish Town, the capital of the island:

nearly 150 carpenters, 60 masons, 96 shoemakers, 127 tailors, 772 sempstresses and 800 servants - that is, about 1,900 individuals out of an adult population of 3,124 of all classes, many of whom are without knowing where to obtain their daily bread, and all of whom are suffering more or less from the high prices of food and raiment and excessive taxation. (1)

The attitude and lethargy of the House of Assembly, together with the constant pressures brought to bear by the plantocracy, who though no longer officially owners of slaves nevertheless refused to relinquish the concept of masters, discouraged both trust and respect from either group. When, after 1838, when the new peasantry emerged, one of the great expectations was that they would be a strong political force in the island: potentially they were, but in reality they were restricted to the point of impotence. This was a situation paralleled in England when, after the Reform of Parliament in 1832, the working class still remained excluded from the political process. Likewise in Jamaica, the vote was a closely guarded privilege. The electoral laws of 1858 stated that voters must have a freehold of £6, or pay rent of £20, or have a salary of £50, or pay tax to the amount of 20s. in the year, or have a deposit of £100 in the bank for a year; and every freeholder must be registered at the cost of 10s. a year. The renewed law of 1864 dropped the 10s. registration fee, but the £6 freeholder was required to have paid 20s. taxes in order to be exempt from the 20s. stamp, while the 20s. taxpayer remained subject to the stamp duty. At a time of economic depression it was not surprising that so few qualified for the franchise.

Politically, the Negro was supposed to be free, but the concept of democracy was still suspect, therefore he was still the slave of an oligarchic system ruled over by the plantocracy. Economically, the Negroes, especially those tradesfolk who had taken advantage of the new peasantry which had grown around the free villages, were often better off than many of the white community, but were socially still second-class

1. Underhill Phillippo op.cit. 327  
Jamaican Papers No.1, op.cit. 6

citizens. Inadequate understanding of the needs of the people only served to disqualify the government from taking any remedial action, whilst for their part, the ex slave together with their children and grandchildren experienced depths of poverty which underlined for them the lesson that freedom rightly understood demanded more than the mere words of a Parliamentary Bill: it was concerned with a new understanding and a new experience of the meaning of being a human being, it demanded a mutual respect and trust which was then impossible.

Against such a background, it was to be expected that extremists, provoked by injustice and hunger, should attempt to take matters into their own hands irrespective of the outcome; revolt and massacre seemed a small price to pay for centuries of serfdom and the hope of a meaningful freedom.

## 2. Problems of the Baptist Church

When Knibb and Burchell advocated complete autonomy for the Jamaican Baptist Church they did so in all good faith, in the expectation of the continued success they had experienced immediately after emancipation. In 1842, Knibb gave evidence before the House of Commons Committee of the general rise of prosperity of the Negro, contrasting the lot of the Negro with that of the British labourer who, though better off than he had been before the advent of the Industrial Revolution, was still an exploited being: (1)

What with the four-poster bedsteads, the side-boards, the mahogany chairs, the riding horses, the broodmares, the provision-grounds and other advantages whether arising during slavery, or during the apprenticeship, or during freedom, you consider the labourers in Jamaica at present better off than the labourers in this country? Decidedly; I should be very sorry to see them as badly off as the labourers here; half of them starving. (2)

In view of such statements it is little wonder that Carlyle should depict the Negro as an idle person sitting "up to his ears in pumpkin". (3) Nevertheless, the optimism of Knibb and Burchell was shared by not a few amongst the Planting community, with increasing demands for a higher rate of immigration, and the House of Assembly pledging to finance the introduction of 5,000 more Indian immigrants in 1846, (4) and is evidenced also by the readiness on several estates to experiment both with machinery and with crops. (5)

The deaths of Knibb and Burchell robbed the Baptist Mission of the two men who might well have guided the Mission through the difficult days soon to follow in 1846; they would certainly have made some impact on the movement of disintegration affecting not only Baptists with their congregational principle, but also the Methodists with their central authority based on England. (6)

When, in 1843, the indigenous Baptist Church was established, it was in the expectation that it would be completely self-supporting. The economic decline which followed so hard on 1843 revealed the lack of adequate preparation for so complete an indigenous church, and it was

1. Kitson Clark op.cit. 92-94
2. cited Williams British Historians op.cit. 88
3. ibid 70
4. Hall Free Jamaica op.cit. 54
5. ibid 30-35, 167-168
6. Curtin op.cit. 166

not long before the Jamaica Baptists were compelled, notwithstanding an earlier generous grant of £6,000 given by the B.M.S. in 1845, to ask for aid to help reduce the manse and chapel debts, which amounted to approximately £18,000. (1) In their eagerness the Jamaican church had overstretched its resources and the ensuing debts reduced their political ability drastically, as Dr. King observed in 1850, the missionary no longer had any influence in the country. (2) Almost all the letters of J. E. Henderson speak of debt, while Millard of St. Ann's wrote that "debts are a drag" and listed the total debts of the missionaries as between £7,000 and £7,500. (3)

The political and economic climate had changed drastically so that money was even more difficult to obtain; this was made more difficult for the Dissenting churches for the simple reason that the second and third generation freed Negroes no longer felt the same need for the kind of leadership and help once offered by the missionaries. They had gained freedom officially, even if not in reality. What they were now concerned about was the exercise of their independency, which was to have a damaging effect upon the establishment of a united Jamaica Baptist Union. (4)

Some measure of blame for the inevitable situation in which the missionaries found themselves must lie with the Home Committee who, though in the difficult position of being responsible for personnel and property on the island yet no longer responsible for the structure of its churches were, nevertheless, still looked to as a policy making body, but unfortunately seemed devoid of any policy whatsoever concerning the Jamaican Baptists.

There was a strong tendency for Christian Missions to work strictly along European lines, forcing the missionary situation into a European mould. (5) The Baptist emphasis upon an indigenous Jamaican Baptist Church seems now, in the light of much modern missionary thinking, to be in advance of its time: just over 70 years later Henry Venn attempted to establish an indigenous African Church with the consecration of Bishop Crowther, but he was frustrated "by missionaries of lesser vision".(6)

1. Underhill Phillippo op.cit. 246. Hinton op.cit. 496

2. King, op.cit. 100-102

3. Millard Letters March 23rd 1850 W.I.R.L.K.

4. See below p. 253-255

5. ~~Curton~~ op.cit. 162. see also Neil, S. Colonialism and Christian Missions Lond. 1966

6. Warren op.cit. 138-139

The fact that the Home Committee was devoid of policy tended to heighten the weakness of the Congregational principle. Dr. Dorothy Ryall's comment that the decline of the Baptist Mission in Jamaica between 1846 and 1861 "amply demonstrated the potential weakness of the Congregational type of administration for a mission church" (1) is, in fact, a partial judgement, for it only gives one side of the picture. The congregational principle is potentially both weak and strong - weak if the particular church is weak, which was in a measure true of the Baptists at this time because of the withdrawal of much of the financial help which came from the Negroes themselves, this was one of the direct results of the economic decline. Notwithstanding the decline in numbers and of finance, the strength of the Congregational principle was evidenced in the ability of the Baptists community to maintain its witness and to grow so that the year 1865 found them once more a not insignificant force in the life of the island; this, it can be argued, was due mainly to a policy which enabled the laity to function at full strength.

The problem lay not in the Congregational policy or system, for it could be argued that it was the most adaptable system for a missionary situation; rather the problem lay in the refusal of the authorities both in Britain and in Jamaica to allow the system to function. There were not a few people during this period who argued that the Baptist Missionary Society, once relieved of its financial responsibility for the Jamaica Mission, failed to sustain a system it had encouraged into being. (2) The fact remains, however, that there was a religious decline both in England (3) and Jamaica; though according to Dr. Ryall's statement, Baptists and Congregationalists ought to have been more successful than they were in England, while the Methodists, Presbyterians and Anglicans should have been gaining where the Dissenter failed in Jamaica, but this was not the case.

During this period in England there was, in fact, a growing awareness of the denomination as well as an awareness of the strength of the local church. It would be foolish to deny that the Congregational principle had potential weaknesses, as is clearly shown by the period now under

1. Ryall, op.cit. 138. Kilpatrick op.cit. 40. Dr. Ryall's judgement does not seem to be borne out in present day Baptist life in Jamaica.
2. See below p. 252
3. Payne, E.A. Baptist Union op.cit. 73-74

review, with its bitter struggles within the denomination as well as constant opposition from without. However, it ought not to be overlooked that such a system, no matter how imperfectly displayed, acts as a safeguard against complete totalitarianism, keeping alive the spark of freedom for the individual.

The lack of policy at home was paralleled in Jamaica by divisions within the Baptist Movement in the island. As early as 1849 Governor Grey wrote of the Baptists that they "are much divided amongst themselves, and certainly have not the power over the negro population which they possessed a few years ago". (1) It is probable that this was due largely to the lack of strong leadership, rather than the loss of finance; Underhill conceded the possibility that a more ample supply of suitable pastors between 1839 and 1842 may have prevented the situation he discovered during his visit in 1859. (2) One of the immediate results of the lack of European leadership was the increase of Native leadership. Joshua Tinson wrote a long letter to Sir Morton Peto, on the subject of the necessity of a native ministry, in which he stated as his considered opinion that:

I am not aware of any mission field that has been opened, and brought under culture by Europeans, the cultivation of which has been taken up and successfully carried on by a native ministry. There may be such cases, but if so, they are the exceptions, and not the rule; and why is this? It surely is not in accordance with the genius of Christianity the design of its Author, or the aims of missionary societies. The Religion of the Bible, like all productions of Deity, has its seed in itself, and is destined to fill the earth with its fruitfulness, by the diffusion of its principles, through the agency of its recipients. (3)

This thesis was not acceptable to all the denominations, Underhill was questioned on his arrival in Jamaica about the wisdom of the B.M.S. being involved in the establishment of a College specifically to train a native ministry; he was "assured by some estimable persons, both lay and clerical, that to place the churches under the government and teaching of black men would be productive of manifold evils". (4) The marked increase in the use of Native pastors was welcomed by most of the English Baptists, (5)

1. Martin, op.cit. 98
2. Underhill West Indies op.cit. 431
3. Baptist Magazine 1850, 449-452
4. Underhill West Indies op.cit. 303
5. Save John Clarke, now called Mr. Africa Clarke, who since his return had not endeared himself to either his colleagues or the B.M.S. Committee: see Henderson and Fray letters.

but there was a disturbing factor which may well be connected with this increase in native authority, namely a distinct move away from the Jamaica Baptist Union itself; by 1864 a report by the Rev. William Teal, commemorating the Jubilee of the Baptist Mission, stated that:

There are 74 regularly organized churches, having a membership amounting to about 30,000; and there are several churches in the island which have sprung from the operation of the Mission, though not now in connexion with it. (1)

The reasons for the drift away from the Jamaica Baptist Union are probably two-fold; firstly the lack of influential leadership within the island: since the deaths of Knibb and Burchell there seemed no one able to stand up to the plantocracy as they had been able to do. Secondly, there was the increase in the numbers of Native pastors. This increase of Native pastors was one facet of the Negro's development as an independent responsible being, it was, therefore, inevitable that some attempt at increasing his influence and power within the community should be made. Other denominations faced similar problems; it was the struggle of the coloured community within the Methodist Church to exercise responsibility which brought about the divisions during the 1830s with its development of a 'two-caste' church system, though the Jamaica Wesleyan Methodist Association, formed by Edward Jordan the coloured political leader and Rev. Thomas Pennock, eventually failed because of the lack of financial aid. (2)

Without powerful leadership, and the growing diversity within the denomination, the churches on the island had to undergo a new wave of tension and uncertainty.

The relationship between the British Government and the House of Assembly had, over the years, become increasingly tenuous, accompanied by an element of contempt on the part of the Jamaican Assembly. After 1843 a not dissimilar divergence developed between the B.M.S. in England and the Jamaica Baptist Church. An anomalous situation was created in which an indigenous church existed, though the majority of its ministers were still B.M.S. agents, and most of its property belonged legally to the B.M.S. (3) It was a situation not unlike that which in 1817 caused

1. Knight, R.L. Edit. Liberty and Progress Kingston 1938, 18

2. Gardner op.cit. 465. Curtin op.cit. 36

3. In 1969 the Jamaican Parliament passed an Act of Incorporation of the Jamaica Baptist Union, making it possible for the Union to be Trustees of Baptist Property, and in July 1969 the B.M.S. transferred the deeds of property still held by them to the J.B.U.



the split in the mission in India, causing Carey to break with the Home society. (1) This lack of clarification of the relationship between the B.M.S. and the Jamaican Church resulted in suspicion and misunderstanding. In England there were those who were not too happy about the relationship between the Missionary Society and the home churches. James <sup>Phillippo</sup> ~~Murcell~~ <sup>MURSELL</sup> and E.S. Pryce wrote an open letter concerning a possible change in Constitution of the Society, advocating a closer union with the Baptist Union of Britain and the local churches, with the Missionary Society, and with greater representation from the local churches on the Society's Committee. This was strongly opposed by John Haddon on the grounds that such a merger would not be in accordance with the New Testament concept of the church - but the B.M.S. did not pretend to be a church! (2)

The strained relationship between the B.M.S. and members of the Jamaica Mission brought forth some bitter comments: J. E. Henderson, minister at Waldensia (later of Montego Bay), illustrates the confusion which seemed to exist, when in 1847 he wrote to the Committee:

I am sorry I cannot agree to allow a portion of the missionary fund that will be raised by the church here to be applied to the paying of a missionary's expenses for the church at Jericho. The church and Jericho is large and wealthy and well able to raise all that is necessary for the purpose - should you resolve to give a portion of the funds of the missionary Union for this purpose I shall exert my influence to induce the church here and at Unity, to contribute to some special object. (3)

There can be no doubt that Henderson, one of the Society's most persistent critics, felt somewhat ostracised: ten years later in 1857 he wrote "I sometimes wish I had as many friends at Moorgate Street as some others". (4) In 1850 he had signed a joint letter of resignation from four ministers of the Western Union which opened with the indictment:

We have frequently united in statements made by the Baptist Western Union in reference to the painful position of the affairs of our Mission in this island, and cannot but regret that there appears to be no prospect of any steps being taken which are likely, permanently, to remove the evils we deplore, or alter the circumstances of our position so painful and humiliating....and require measures for their effectual removal which we have no hope of seeing adopted by their Committee...

1. Potts, op.cit. 15, 24-32
2. Baptist Magazine 1850, 173-174, 232-234. an argument still debated
3. Henderson August 2nd 1847 W.I.R.L.K.
4. ibid April 23rd 1857

The writers go on to point out that the British public failed to appreciate the situation they were still prepared to send men into: Henderson went as far as to write that "the positive refusal of the Committee to help in any way, compels me to abandon the work" (1) He was by no means alone in his severe criticisms of the Home Committee, one of the senior missionaries, Walter Dendy, was just as ready to voice his displeasure at the apparent apathy of the Committee towards the situation in Jamaica. In a letter to Underhill in September 1851, in which he pleaded for a missionary to be sent to Westmorland where there were two churches, no minister and a population of 26,000, he indicated that he was not too hopeful of any notice being taken of his appeal, and a note of sarcasm ran through the letter:

I cannot tell what may have been the result of the deliberations of the Committee on Jamaican matters, but I hope that some effective plan has been accepted, that will tend to the welfare of the mission. If this has not been done I do not expect that any letter from me will have any effect at Moorgate Street, seeing that I am but a plain man, not having been brought up in the school of the prophets, and being desolate of all those qualifications that are necessary for a special pleader - However unsuccessful I may be, and however I may regret the failure of the mission through want of agency that is effective - it will to me be a source of satisfaction to know that I have clean hands in the matter, and a clean conscience, having used the means in my power to awaken a concern for a mission which God at present has not forsaken, altho' He permitted trials and difficulties to beset its path to test the sincerity of the zeal and faith of missionaries in the islands, and Christians in England. (2)

As in the case of the British Government's relegation of Jamaica to the political backwaters, in preference for India and even Africa, so the Missionary Societies also saw in India and Africa greater prospects. The B.M.S. had also to contend with the problem of insufficient finance, which exacerbated the Jamaican problem of debts incurred during the period of expansion, consequently they prevaricated over the question of the Widows and Orphans Fund, which caused not a few of the Jamaican missionaries to suffer some hardship.

According to the Dendy correspondence, (3) it would appear that the Fund derived most of its capital from compulsory contributions both

1. Henderson October 24th 1850, November 10th 1850. W.I.R.L.K.
2. Dendy, September 8th 1851, W.I.R.L.K.
3. March 5th 1850; September 22nd, October 21st 1851; April 29th 1852; July 21st 1853; February 15th, May 15th 1854; February 21st 1855; see Baptist Magazine 1853.

from churches and missionaries. During the years of disturbance 1832-1854 the Fund was held in abeyance - much to the annoyance of Dendy, owing to his arrival in Jamaica in 1832 he was made to pay three years' arrears before being allowed to become a contributor. During the visit of Dr. Angus and C. M. Birrell of Liverpool, in 1846, the state of the Fund was discussed and new proposals made, which unfortunately came to nothing. The actual decision to dissolve the Fund had already been taken, with Burchell, Knibb, Dendy, Abbott and Day appointed to carry out the necessary arrangements. By 1851 Burchell and Knibb were both dead, Abbott and Day no longer in the island, leaving the unfortunate Dendy with the unenviable task of placating the increasing demands from the contributors. Unwisely, most of the capital had been invested in property, the sale of which produced much less than the original purchasing price due to the depression, and as Dendy reminded the B.M.S. Committee "certain of the brethren were to have cash payments on the winding up of its affairs. Some have applied for their money, of course without success." Oughton was one of the most aggressive applicants, threatening to take the matter to the Courts. Dendy readily admitted that "it was a sad mistake to invest money as we did upon such insecure property". The harrassed Dendy pleaded with the Committee that the affair was "likely to disrupt the peace of the mission and make strife among brethren who are interested in the matter", suggesting that the Committee take matters into their own hands, collecting all the debts possible, and pay at least something to the brethren. There was some reluctance on the part of the Committee to bring the business to a speedy conclusion, no doubt due to its own financial problems(1) while Dendy was left to placate the brethren as best he could; his own request that the money owing to him be transferred into an insurance policy - costing much less than the amount owing to him - was rejected. However, there appeared in the Missionary Herald in May 1853 the following statement:

The affair of the Widow's and Orphas's Fund of Jamaica have had the fullest deliberations; and the Committee are happy to say that the parties interested, with no exception known to them, have concurred in the arrangements proposed for its settlement....The settlement of this long pending and difficult matter will be a cause of rejoicing to all the friends of the Society. (2)

1. Payne Freedom in Jamaica op.cit. 67
2. Baptist Magazine 1853, 319

This was somewhat of an exaggeration, for as late as 1855 Dendy's own case had not been settled, it was little wonder that he felt himself to be out of favour with the London Committee. Disappointed though he was, his loyalty to the Jamaican Mission remained intact, as his letter concerning trouble at Montego Bay evidences:

Alas! for the Jamaican Mission, my life has been bound up with it, and I still feel deep interest in its welfare; and cannot but mourn over its present state and situation. We require an efficient ministry, and good attention paid to education of the rising generation, a sound religious education with such an amount of useful knowledge as shall fit them for the active duties of life; and I cannot but think that if some christian friends knew exactly the position of Jamaica, and its ultimate progress, notwithstanding all its difficulties, that aid would be affected. It might perhaps require wisdom and prudence to select the most judicious mode of bestowing it....I know it is useless thus to write and yet I cannot but express my firm conviction that Jamaica ought not to be altogether abandoned if so, surely, some party will have to account for it. And who will be the guilty party? Those who have the charge of the church here. The Committee of the Baptist Missionary Society, or the church in Gt. Britain. They acted nobly and generously while there was a prospect of an abundant harvest; but now there is a reverse, little sympathy is felt for those who labour in the fields amidst their many discouragements. (1)

Dendy's language may have been emotional, and certainly he overstated his case, for there were still many whose concern for the West Indian mission was evident by their generosity, yet it was his unmistakable concern for the island that forced him to state the situation as it seemed to him, and it was this same concern which made him refuse to gloss over the fact that there was a gulf between the Society and the church it had brought into being.

If there was tension between the B.M.S. and the Jamaica Baptists, there was tension within the local churches, partly accounted for by the period of depression, and partly by the increasing sense of independency amongst the people as a whole. Phillippo was one of the first to experience this growing phenomenon. During his absence in England his assistant, Dowson, gathered around him a strong and vocal group of admirers. When Dowson himself returned from six months in England, in 1844, he revealed his determination to take over from Phillippo as pastor at Spanish Town, obviously encouraged by a strong minority group within the church who sought a measure of authority for themselves. Led by

Dowson the faction within the Spanish Town church demanded possession of the chapel. The relationship between the two factions became such that Phillippo was obliged to take legal action which dragged on for seven years, when the courts found in favour of Phillippo. Meanwhile, another Baptist church had been formed in the town. (1)

The division which took place in Montego Bay in the late 1840s illustrates the growing desire among many of the Negro peasantry to exercise some authority. Burchell's successor at Montego Bay was the Rev. H. B. Cornford, but he can only have been there a short while for, by 1848, the church was without a pastor, relying on local B.M.S. missionaries, Dendy and John May, together with a supply minister, a certain Mr. Hands. During the interregnum there emerged a clash of personalities, causing a severe rift within the church. On the one hand, there was the party led by S. J. Vaughan, who claimed to be the senior deacon, on the other hand there was the party led by Thomas Williams, also a member of the diaconate.

From the correspondence it would seem that the factions were so strongly opposed to each other that they refused to allow the collections to be jointly banked, each faction keeping its own account separate. Vaughan was opposed to the Church secretary, a Mr. Lewin, apparently a member of the Williams' faction, while he, Vaughan, sought to establish Mr. Hands as both minister and secretary. Walter Dendy undertook the difficult task of being mediator, and was able to convene a conference of the two parties on August 28th and 29th 1848 not, however, without procedural difficulties, revealing the deep rift between the factions. Williams wanted the conference to be in the form of an open Church Meeting, in Congregational fashion, whereas Vaughan objected on the grounds that it might exacerbate the existing distrust. A compromise was reached over the number of members who would make up the working parties of the conference. The whole exercise was a relative success, for a compromise was reached over the finance, but by no means was there any healing of the fundamental antagonisms, which soon divided the church irreparably.

On January 9th 1849 the church held a meeting to decide upon a pastor, and the Rev. James Reid of Clarendon - though not a B.M.S. agent -

1. Underhill Phillippo op.cit. 226-236. United in 1946 by the present minister the Rev. Carter Henry.

was invited to become minister: the invitation signed by both Vaughan and Williams gave the impression that there was unity in the church, an impression unwittingly accepted by Reid, it was but the lull before the storm. On March 19th Dendy had to report that the church was again divided and a second church proposed. His letter indicated that the Western Union had acted somewhat officiously over the matter of the property of the church at Montego Bay, giving someone (presumably Mr. Hands) possession of it without consulting the Church, it was an act which resulted in the church withdrawing from the Union; Dendy also mentioned the fact that there were some members of the Western Union who not only favoured a second church in Montego Bay, but who were also prepared to assist in its establishment. (1)

By April 9th, over 200 members seceded. The grounds of the secession were two-fold, firstly the faction remained aggrieved from the previous disputes, the election of Mr. Lewin to the diaconate was openly opposed by the Vaughan party - which may suggest that Reid had found a stronger ally in Thomas Williams than in S. J. Vaughan who had attempted earlier to obtain the position of minister for Mr. Hands. Secondly, there was strong objection from the Vaughan party against the break with the Western Union. (2) Before we blame the divisions which occurred within the Jamaican churches upon the Negro in his search for power, we need to remember that the years now under review were, for the Nonconformists in England, years of "dissension and decline", (3) and as so much of the spirit of England was percolating through to the island through visitors and the religious journals, it was to be expected that similar occurrences should take place.

The events in Montego Bay were too much for Dendy, he had spent considerable time and energy trying to unite the church and in an outburst he gave vent to his feelings that much of the struggle being experienced by the Jamaican church was the result of the lack of concern in the English churches. (4) The two churches in Montego Bay, the Burchell church and the Calvary Baptist church in Market Street, which

1. Dendy 19th March 1849, 29th April 1849, W.I.R.L.K.

2. *ibid*

3. Halevy, E. Victorian Years 1841-1895: Halevy's history of the English People in the Nineteenth Century Vol. 4 1951 p. 377

4. Dendy 9th April 1849 W.I.R.L.K.

had invited J. E. Henderson to be its minister, existed in mutual respect of each other until 1854, when it would seem that Reid himself was the cause of dissension. The majority of the membership had requested Reid's resignation but he flatly refused and, in consequence, 700 members seceded. (1) In fairness to Henderson, during these years he attempted to unite the two churches, even though his own rapidly outgrew the church of which Reid was the minister, but Reid would have nothing to do with such suggestions. (2)

It was inevitable that with the lack of strong leadership and a shortage of money, together with the phenomenon that second and third generation freed Negroes did not feel any sense of dependency upon the missionaries, or even obligation as their father may have done, the result was a general exodus from the churches throughout the island. There was, however, one brief period of relief from this neglect of the churches by the populace, namely the period of Revival. To the churches involved it brought a ray of hope, but to the plantocracy it became a reason for unrest and a cause of the Morant Bay Tragedy. W. L. Mathieson seems to share this opinion when he wrote "Unfortunately, just before war broke out in America, Jamaica was subjected to the phenomenon known in the religious world as a 'revival'. (3)

The revival was but a brief experience, producing a positive result as far as the church was concerned; the Union meetings held in St. Ann's Bay in 1861 reported an increase of 4,422, bringing the total membership to 20,026. (4) While on the other hand it did have a negative effect in that many who participated in the revival neglected their work, this did not have the effect upon the economy as many of the critics tried to make out. (5) Dr. Edwin Orr's comment on the improvement in the religious situation is somewhat overstated, the L.M.S. withdrawal from Jamaica in 1867 could well be accounted for by other reasons, not all the island was evangelised, at least not all the island responded, as is suggested by the L.M.S. claim (6). Some of the most positive effects lay in the moral change of many of the converts, Phillippo wrote:

1. Henderson October 21st 1856, W.I.R.L.K.

2. *ibid* July 12th 1856

3. Mathieson Sugar Colony op.cit. 168

4. Knight Liberty and Progress op.cit. 15

5. Hall Free Jamaica op.cit. 239

6. Orr, J. E. The Light of the Nations Lond. 1965, 176-177. Payne Freedom in Jamaica op.cit. 88. Lovett op.cit. 381 ff.

to an intelligent observer the power of God cannot but be visible in the effect produced. A striking change is observable in the conversation, temper, development, and even the very countenance of the converts. (1)

The L.M.S. missionary Alloway is more explicit:

many of the rum shops and gambling houses, which were the greatest hindrance to our usefulness, have been closed, husbands and wives, long separated, have been reconciled; prodigal children have returned penitent to their parents. (2)

The Revival broke out in the southern part of the island in 1860, at one of the Moravian missions, though a group of Moravians had been meeting and praying for Revival at New Carmel since 1858. (3) The Baptists, however, had systematically prepared themselves for such an event since the Assembly of 1857 when, having discussed the low spiritual state of the island, they accepted the following recommendations:

- i) The Pastor to hold special church meetings of the members to consider the spiritual state of the church, the members to be invited to give suggestions and exhortations.
- ii) Ministers to invite neighbouring ministers to co-operate by holding similar meetings each in his own church or churches.
- iii) While church meetings were held to revise the piety and zeal of professing christians, congregational meetings should be gathered for awakening the careless and the wicked.
- iv) Pastors, leaders, and members to organize house to house visitation in each district of the sphere
- v) The ministers to preach a special course of sermons with a view to revival, hold Bible instruction classes, and have certain days set apart for united prayer. (4)

Behind the recommendations it is possible to detect the influence of the events taking place in England and even the events affecting several countries during this period; literature such as the Missionary Herald and the Baptist Magazine which was sent to the missionaries, as well as the regular correspondence would, without doubt, reflect the religious propensity at home which led British Baptists to talk of a 'Revival Decade'. (5) Consequently, with this encouragement, the Assembly set about the task of stimulating the spiritual condition of their constituent churches, and the Revival which followed spread throughout the Dissenting churches and was especially conducive to the Negro, following

1. Underhill Phillippo op.cit. 312-313

2. Lovett, op.cit. 285

3. Hutton, op.cit. 225

4. Knight, Liberty and Progress op.cit. 13-14

5. Payne Baptist Union op.cit. 79. Kitson Clark, op.cit. 185



a pattern not unlike that experienced in America in 1858, then Ireland and Britain. (1) Reaction to the revival depended largely upon the observer's religious background; the Rev. C. R. Chandler, incumbent of Guy's Hill St. Ann, described it as an "awful profanation of religion". (2) Ecstatic behaviour was reported to be rife, and the whole Movement was said to be encouraging "sensuality and reckless vagaries". (3) Ellis Fray estimated that in Falmouth 300-400, plus a hundred backsliders, were attending the church, and out of the vast number baptised only two or three cases of bodily prostrations were reported at the mission station at Refuge; (4) while Dendy says of the great number attending Salter's Hill, only two needed church discipline. (5)

It was not the pressures of economic distress which provided the stimulus for revival in the parish of Manchester, for it was a relatively prosperous parish of small settlers, (6) most probably it was in part due to the fact that, in spite of the loss of leadership in the community, the local church and the minister still provided the only real centre for social activities; emotionally, the people were ready for some experience that would alleviate their general distress.

Philip Curtin has suggested that the Revival was responsible for the movement of some Christian groups towards African religion, suggesting that one of the results of the 1860-1861 Revival was a mixture of Myalism and Christianity "ending as a permanent addition to the Afro-Christian cultus". (7) There is some truth in this argument but, once again, there is a tendency to describe anything that differs from orthodox European Christianity as sub-Christian and heretical. Consequently, Native Baptists are often suspect, and even Gardner writes of the "problem of the Native Baptist". (8) Phillippo's experience over the law suit "greatly affected his judgement of the Negro character", (9) but it did not alter his concern for the Negro, it certainly did not develop in him an anti-Native Baptist attitude. (10)

One hesitates to accept Professor Curtin's judgement that the re-

1. see Orr, J.E. The Second Evangelical Awakening in Britain Lond. 1948

Orr, J.E. The Light of the Nations op.cit. 101-109

2. Hall Free Jamaica op.cit. 239

3. ibid

4. Fray April 29th 1861, W.I.R.L.K.

5. Dendy December 31st 1861 W.I.R.L.K.

6. Hall Free Jamaica op.cit. 237

7. Curtin op.cit. 171-172

8. Gardner, op.cit. 467

9. Underhill Phillippo op.cit. 230

10. see below p. 280

lationship between the missionary and the Negro "was itself coming apart" without some qualification. As far as the Baptists were concerned, they depended to a very large extent upon a continuing good relationship between missionary and Negro.

The impact of the Revival was, however, insufficient to counteract the corrosive action of economic factors on the life of the church, soon after there came the drought which exacerbated an already critical situation.

Financial stringency, internal strife and a drastic decline in membership left the church in a weak position, sapping the potential as a social force; the extent of this weakness is evidenced by two problems affecting the relationship of Church and State, namely the Orphan's Bill of 1851 and the difficulties of financing their educational demands. The Orphan's Bill of 1851

In an attempt to exploit the distressing situation under the guise of humanitarianism, the Assembly passed an Orphans Act in 1851. Walter Dendy, one of the most prolific of letter writers, (1) informed Underhill of the proposed Bill on May 3rd 1851. The epidemic of cholera during that year had increased the number of orphans, but the response of friends and relatives to the problem, in spite of poverty, was, according to Dendy, remarkable. The rumour which prompted his letter suggested that "immense powers are to be entrusted to the chairmen of Quarter Sessions, by which any children (whether orphan or not) who may appear to be destitute, may be taken by a policeman and shut up as a felon till they are twenty-one years of age". (2) On May 7th, Dendy wrote again to say that the Bill had been passed and signed by the Governor. If by chance the missionaries were accused of neglect in not taking action sooner, Dendy gives good reason for such negligence; at the time illustrating how devious were the workings of the Assembly: "the fact is, that we know scarcely anything about the enactments until they are passed, printed and perhaps in operation for some months". (3)

Dendy was prepared to admit that "the object of the Bill was apparently good", they were led to believe that such orphanages would "be

1. In the West India Reference Library alone there are 73 letters of his.
2. Dendy May 3rd, 1851. W.I.R.L.K.
3. *ibid.* May 7th 1851.

conducted on the most liberal principles, but alas, what a piece of sectarianism, and what a spice of slavery is found in it". (1) By May 24th he reported the five major objections to the Bill, which were accepted at a meeting held at Salter's Hill, to be forwarded to the Queen in the hope that she would intervene:

- i) The immense power that was given to the chairman of the Quarter Sessions, who could order a policeman to convey to the asylum any child or children that to them might appear destitute.
- ii) The making of the Governor of the asylum the legal guardian of such children until they were twenty-one years of age - no provision being made in transference of guardianship to those who were their natural guardians if they became able and willing to take such responsibilities.
- iii) The sectarian character of the religious instruction - only the doctrine of the Church of England was to be taught.
- iv) At the age of fourteen, the orphans or other destitute children were to be appointed to agricultural labour - the least of the trades, domestic service, was expressly forbidden - no difference being made in this respect to females.
- v) The institution was not placed under sufficient control, or public inspection. (2)

Even the English situation, as described by Charles Dickens, in Oliver Twist (1839), showed a more liberal attitude, and though the sceptic might argue that the real basis of Baptist criticism lay in section (iii) namely, the enforcement of Church of England Doctrine, it would seem more reasonable to argue that section (iv) was the crucial point of their objection, for it revealed the raison d'etre of the Bill, namely an attempt to meet labour requirements, thus lending substance to Dendy's scepticism as to the altruistic motives of the Assembly.

The labour situation on the island was desperate, so that there can be no doubt that behind the Orphan's Bill lay an attempt to supply much needed agricultural workers, for "though the old planters are always ready to raise the cry 'The Negroes will not work', this means "they will not work for nothing""; (3) nevertheless, according to Ellis Fray, they

1. Dendy, May 7th 1851, W.I.R.L.K.
2. *ibid*, May 24th 1851
3. *ibid*, March 8th 1851

were not too anxious to have American refugees, for "they are too wide-awake for the Jamaican planters - they would like to have ignorant coolies and Africans to deal with". (1) The Planters still accepted the false premise that a suppressed people was the most malleable, in spite of the lesson of 1832.

Meanwhile, in England the problem of dealing with the poorer members of society was exercising the minds of the authorities. The 1834 Commission dealing with this subject produced its report and shifted the responsibilities from the parish vestries to the newly elected boards of Guardians. The new laws were designed to deal with agricultural rather than industrial pauperism. (2)

The events taking place in Jamaica during 1851 were in accord with the pattern set by the Mother country, but there were many in England who, led by Cobbett, saw the new poor law as another form of control over the working-class, and this was also the basis of the objection to the Orphan's Bill set out by Dendy who believed, not without cause, that the Orphan's Act was a licence for a new slavery.

#### Difficulties in the Work of Education

If church work suffered at this period, the work of education was even more vulnerable. In 1848 Dendy wrote "money is exceedingly scarce, employment is difficult to be procured - and there is a great falling off in the receipts of all voluntary religious and educational societies". (3) Oughton reported in 1850 that the Wesleyans also had to close down twenty of their schools through lack of finance. (4)

The economic decline made educational work increasingly difficult for Baptists and the Congregationalists, because of their commitment to the Voluntary Principle; a situation which was aggravated even further for the Baptists by their withdrawal from association with the British and Foreign Schools Society in 1848, from whom hitherto they had been able to obtain a grant towards school equipment. The Society had grown out of the Royal Lancaster Society founded in 1808 by the Quaker Joseph Lancaster. (5) As the work developed it changed its name to the British and Foreign Schools Society, and catered mainly for the nonconformist

1. Fray December 23rd 1862 W.I.R.L.K.
2. see Woodward op.cit. 448-462. Chadwick, O. The Victorian Church Part I Lond. 1966, 95-98
3. Dendy September 4th 1848, W.I.R.L.K.
4. Baptist Magazine 1850, 762
5. see The Baptist Quarterly Vol. XX No. 7 July 1964 G.E.Smith 'Patterns of Missionary Education: India 1794-1824' 293-312 for example of the Lancastrian pattern.

and liberal Anglicans, while its contemporary rival, The National Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church, founded by Andrew Bell in 1811, as its name indicates catered for the needs of the Established Church. (1)

The struggle to develop an acceptable educational system in England began immediately after the conclusion of the Napoleonic wars and developed into "a most gruelling struggle - this battle was waged, almost without an armistice, from 1820 until 1902". (2) In 1833, encouraged by Lord Brougham, the Whig government made a grant of £20,000 'for the purpose of education' to be shared between the two societies. In 1839 the grant was increased to £30,000 and at the same time a special committee of the Privy Council was set up to administer the grant and appoint inspectors. The Established Church with its 'National Schools' appeared to be the chief recipient of the money, displeasing the Dissenters who, notwithstanding their earlier conscience on receiving state money later supported state education, argued that it was unfair to be taxed in order to support a denominational system they opposed. Professor Gash's comment that "Free Trade in education had taken too firm a hold on the Baptists and the majority of the Congregationalists to be soothed away by more and more easily obtainable State assistance" (3) is also applicable to the Jamaican scene for, in 1847, a Government circular on Education reached the island, suggesting similar reforms in the Colonial educational system. The Dissenters in Jamaica, namely the Baptists and the Congregationalists, joined by the Presbyterians, opposed any Government interference, and sent a resolution to the effect that they deprecated any such interference, especially the proposals concerning compulsory taxation and fines and reiterated the case for a voluntary system of education. (4)

The British and Foreign Schools Society accepted the Government's proposals, and in 1846 accepted also a Government grant towards their work, a grant which had, in fact, been available to them since 1833. At home, the steady decline of the Society's influence and the increase in

1. see Horton Davies The English Free Church Lond. 1963 p.149. Asa Briggs op.cit. 336-337. Owen Chadwick The Victorian Church op.cit. 338-346
2. Davies op.cit. 148
3. Gash, N. Reaction and Reconstruction in English Politics 1832-1852 Lond. 1965, 107
4. Dendy, February 15th 1849

the amount of money being channelled to the National Schools caused grave disquiet to the Dissenters; of the £100,000 paid during the first five years, the National Schools received £70,000, by 1848 they were receiving a total of £125,000. (1) In Jamaica, the Baptist ministers of the Western Union, alarmed at the way the British and Foreign Schools Society was slowly being over-run, finally felt compelled to sever their association, stating that "There (sic) grants can however be no longer applied for in consequence of the position of that Society with Government". (2) Dendy expressed the missionaries' fear when he wrote:

We have not a better Board of Education in Jamaica, or more trustworthy than the English Board - The following are its Commissioners. The Governor, the Bishop, the President of the Council, the Speaker of the Assembly, the Vice Chancellor, the Governor's Secretary and the nominations of the Governor, A. G. Johnston and E. Jordon Esquire - What are we to expect from such a board - will any favour be shown (to) Dissenters. They appoint their own Inspectors - will not every effort be made to crush us, and to elevate the State Church? (3)

Phillippo, who was somewhat of a pioneer in Jamaican Education, made the point that "if Government interferes at all in the education of the people, it must do so rather by aiding and promoting voluntary efforts than by centralisation and direct control". (4) The fear of unfair advantage being taken by the Establishment was not without some justification, as the grant situation in England revealed.

The capital raised in England to launch the Jamaica Baptist Education Society was soon exhausted, and the numbers of contributors declined - though as late as 1850 the name of Cropper still appeared on the lists of contributors; (5) Phillippo admitted that the money from England came mainly from those belonging to the Society of Friends. (6) In 1848 Dendy referred to a "new Free Education Society" (7) and later in 1850 the Baptist Magazine reported that George Alexander, treasurer of the Voluntary Schools Association, had visited the West Indies, and being impressed with what he saw expressed the wish that a sum of no less than £500-£700 be immediately offered to the Baptists in Jamaica; he made

1. Chadwick, op.cit. 338-342

2. Dendy School Report December 31st 1847, W.I.R.L.K.

3. Dendy 19th April 1847, W.I.R.L.K.

5. Fray December 9th 1850 W.I.R.L.K.

7. Dendy, 4th September 1848

4. Underhill Phillippo op.cit 248

6. ibid, 315

the significant comment that they suffered from severe taxation, and that the education in general on the island suffered from a lack of trained teachers. (1)

By the 1860s the school situation was desperate, Ellis Fray informed Underhill that he could only run a three day school and this cost him £60 per annum for the teaching staff. Previously, in 1852, Dendy appealed to the B.M.S. Committee to set up a fund in order that the educational work could continue, for "missionaries can hardly take responsibility of Teacher support, unless from some quarter, there is help promised to a certain extent." (2)

The Education Society connected with the Jamaica Baptist Mission with its clear objective of starting and sustaining Day Schools where secular and religious instruction was imparted free from sectarian, and free from Governmental interference, in its report for 1859-1860 indicates the seriousness of the situation when it states:

This is the first year that this Society has requested a matter made under this head (school fees), 24 schools report children's fees to amount to about £35 - 10 - 10 - 0. If the others were in the same proportion the whole of the fees would amount to upwards of 700, this is a smaller sum than ought to be paid by the parents and guardians, but when it is remembered that this is comparatively a new item of expense, among a people that cannot at present appreciate the value of education, it ought to be a matter of encouragement to perseverance. (3)

Because of the weak state of the churches there was little they could actually accomplish in the matter of the Orphan's Bill and the new educational situation was made more complicated for the Baptists by the fact that the Methodists were ready to accept whatever grants were being offered. Notwithstanding the problems they managed as best they could, but there was a more terrifying problem awaiting them: rebellion broke out once more.

1. The Baptist Magazine 1850, 492
2. Dendy, November 4th 1852, W.I.R.L.K.
3. ibid, December 31st 1861, W.I.R.L.K.

### 3. The Morant Bay Tragedy

The riot at Morant Bay in 1865 provoked memories of the 1832 revolt and, with it, fears of another Haitian massacre; it also provided Thomas Carlyle and his disciples with valuable material for their thesis that the Negro should never have been emancipated. The British intelligentsia became actively interested in the affair, and were soon divided into two opposing factions; surprisingly, the point at issue was not so much the riot and its causes, but the question of whether Governor Eyre was a hero or murderer.

The Jamaica Committee was formed in an attempt to bring Eyre to justice, (1) and boasted most of the leading scientists of the day, Darwin, Huxley, Lyell and Herbert Spencer, amongst its members, not to mention several university professors and radical members of Parliament such as John Bright, the leader of the group being John Stuart Mill. The Eyre Defence Fund gained most of its support from the literary giants of the time, Carlyle, Ruskin, Tennyson, Kingsley and Charles Dickens. Ruskin, who had come under the influence of Carlyle, was expected to come out on the side of Eyre, he opposed Mill and the Jamaica Committee partly because he saw in Radicals and Radicalism the cause of much of human misery, and feared that they might unleash mob violence in Britain; of Mill and his friends he wrote "they are for Liberty, and I am for Lordship; they are Mob's men, and I am a King's man". (2)

Ever since the event took place, historians have been divided over the question of how to assess Eyre's handling of the Morant Bay affair. Lord Sydney Olivier's The Myth of Governor Eyre published in 1933 strongly contended for Eyre's unsuitability for the position of Governor, placing the bulk of the responsibility for the Morant Bay tragedy upon the Governor; this was followed in 1936 by W. L. Mathieson's The Sugar Colonies and Governor Eyre 1849-1866 which attempted to tone down the attack made by Olivier. Since Mathieson's work, no thorough piece of research on the event was published until 1962 with the appearance of The Governor Eyre Controversy written by the American Scholar, Barnard

1. Semmel, B. The Governor Eyre Controversy Lond. 1962 chapter 3 'The Jamaica Committee and Parliament' pp. 56-80
2. *ibid.* chapter 5 'The Gladiators' pp. 102-127. In the Bulgarian atrocities of 1876, those who supported Eyre, almost to a man were passionately moved by the sufferings of the Bulgarians, whereas at least three of Eyre's critics were unmoved by the horrors.



Semmel, which, in the main, substantiates the findings of Lord Olivier. Characteristically, Dr. Eric Williams in his British Historians and the West Indies published in 1966, makes a short but considerable attack upon the Governor. In 1967 an Australian, Geoffrey Dutton, entered the debate, publishing The Hero as Murderer, a biography of Eyre which sought to assess the character of the man. His chapters on the Jamaican affair appear to be written mainly from the position of Matheison.

The fact that the subject is still divisive makes it all the more important that Baptist involvement during this period be examined, for at the heart of the debate lies the question, raised previously in 1832, as to the extent of Baptist responsibility for insurrection.

Edward John Eyre, born the son of a clergyman in 1815, arose from obscurity to become one of the enigmatic characters of British Colonial history in the nineteenth century, causing a controversy on the British scene which lasted some three years in hot debate, and was not finally buried until 1872, when Gladstone accepted as obligatory that the Tory Government of 1868 had promised to pay the ex-Governor's legal expenses; in 1874 when Disraeli led the Conservatives back into office Eyre was granted a pension as a 'retired colonial governor'. (1)

His activities before becoming Governor of Jamaica included sheep farming in Australia, eventually obtaining an official post as 'Protector of the Aborigines', a written account of which brought him the reputation of protector of the 'Australian black-fellows' which induced the authorities to appoint him as Lieutenant Governor of New Zealand in 1846. His introduction to the West Indies came through a brief spell as Protector of indentured Indian immigrants in Trinidad, and later in 1854 as Lieutenant Governor of St. Vincent, whilst in 1859 he served in the Leeward Islands.

It was during his tour of duty in St. Vincent that his fear of the West Indian Negro became apparant, Dutton commenting upon a disturbance in St. Vincent just after Eyre's arrival says:

What was it that frightened him about the amiable easy going Negroes and Coloured people of the West Indies? One can guess, perhaps, that he found it a nervous strain to be in authority and thus responisble for other people, as an explorer, or even an over-

1. Semmel op.cit. 175-177

lord, or even at Moorundie he had essentially been on his own. (1) This is a question the answer to which would possibly provide us with some clue as to the reasons for Eyre's strange activities and his violent reaction to the Jamaican situation during his term of office.

It was whilst on leave in England that he was offered the temporary post of Acting Governor of Jamaica, during the absence of Governor Darling - an appointment due, no doubt, to the influence of Frederick Rogers, later Lord Blachford, the Permanent Under-Secretary for the Colonies from 1860-1871. It was an appointment that caused some surprise, for the consensus of opinion in Government circles was that Eyre was unsuited for such a difficult post as Jamaica. The Duke of Newcastle, who had headed the Colonial Office since 1859, received an application from Eyre for the post in British Guiana, but in the judgement of Sir Henry Taylor he was not "equal to the very difficult post....where he would have to deal with men of greater ability than himself", a judgement in which Newcastle concurred by saying "He is not strong enough for the place". (2) The period of Acting Governor of Jamaica corroborated Newcastle's judgement and fears. Local opinion in general was decidedly against Mr. Eyre, whilst the confirmation of his appointment as Lieutenant Governor in 1864, at the time when Cardwell took over from Newcastle at the Colonial Office, came as a shock to the majority of the plantocracy. The Jamaica Guardian, a pro-planter newspaper which had, in June of that year, published a strongly worded statement refuting the charges made by the Baptists, on July 8th published a bitter attack on the Governor:

Governor Eyre is daily becoming more unpopular, and nothing could give greater satisfaction to persons of all classes in the country than to hear of his recall. People long for a change. His Excellency will not do. Weak vacillating and undignified in his conduct and character, he has lost caste exceedingly. Former friends have dropped off on the right hand and on the left, unable any longer to stand by a ruler who is so sadly lacking in the qualifications that go to make a governor popular amongst those over whom he may be set. (3)

The Morning Journal, a more moderate newspaper, also complained on July

1. Dutton, op.cit. 204. Eyre was a member of the turbulent and violently racist Anthropological Society of London, which seems to contradict the work he did in Australia. see Burrows, J.W. Evolution and Society Lond. 1966, 118-127
2. Dutton, op.cit. 211
3. Jamaica Papers No. 1, op.cit. 10

8th that no one went to King's House, and had anyone gone uninvited they would not by their reception be tempted to go back a second time, the editorial went on to indict the Governor for his failure to govern:

The feebleness of his understanding makes him unfit to represent the Majesty of the Crown - to conduct the grave business of state. His capacity is scarcely equal to what his great place requires; instead of acting on the advice of those whom the constitution has marked out for his advisors, without which advice he never fails to tell us in his speeches, he could never hope to succeed in his Government, he follows his own stubborn will; instead of acting on great emergencies, by the advice, he invariably waits for instructions from the Colonial ministers, as if they, and not the laws of the Colony, were to govern us: and if it were possible to read those confidential, those secret, despatches, which the people have been brought to regard with horror - a meanness, a poverty of spirit, an abject submission to the will of the Minister of the day, would be found largely to prevail. Men are viewing with alarm and indignation the acts of a Governor, whom the Colonial minister of the day sent here for no other purpose, as it would seem, but to insult our understanding and to tyrannize over us.... Politically the Governor has been a failure, but a far greater failure has he proved in the social obligations of his office. (1)

It is difficult to understand the reasons for one whose reputation of concern for the natives of Australia should in this situation provoke such hostility from all quarters of the community. However, part of the reason may lie in his fears and his prejudices, exhibited in his fear of the West Indian Negro and his own religious imbalance. The West Indian Negro in Jamaica was predominately of Dissenting persuasion, with a special preference for the more radical sects. This in itself placed the Negro beyond Eyre's sympathy; even Dutton in a somewhat ungracious reference to Dissent, says "a devout and strictly Church of England man such as Eyre must have been deeply shocked at having to wade through the surface scum of religion to the elegance of King's House in Spanish Town". (2) If Eyre had not allowed his own form of religious bigotry to dominate, and had used some initiative, he would have recognized that on his own doorstep was a man who, though without Eyre's social advantages, was by far his intellectual superior and in the realms of diplomacy could have saved the Governor a great deal of embarrassment, had he but asked. The man was James Mursell Phillippo, to

1. Semmel, op.cit. 37. Jamaica Papers No.1, op.cit. 10

2. Dutton, op.cit. 21

whom Eyre's successor was not ashamed to acknowledge his indebtedness. In 1866 a situation similar to that which sparked off the Morant Bay affair arose in the settlement called Harlands, which was located upon some abandoned land, where Negroes had settled. Demands for their removal resulted in a detachment of troops and police being sent to the village to effect the eviction. Phillippo, realising what the outcome could be, persuaded the Governor to let him go and mediate, which resulted in an amicable agreement being reached without any bloodshed. (1)

Edward John Eyre was not always perceptive in his choice of friends and associates. On his arrival in 1862, Eyre allowed himself to be caught up in an affair now known as the Tramway Scandal. In an attempt to get a tramway constructed with the utmost speed Eyre became party, however unwittingly, to an attempt to defraud the Jamaican Assembly. An unchecked estimate was presented for £72,000, the design submitted for the proposed tramway was a simple straight line between points A and B. The majority of the important sections of society opposed the project, and even though a length of the proposed rail was sent to England for inspection and condemned as rubbish, Eyre persisted in the project. The Assembly refused to vote the necessary money; for their pains they were rebuked by the Colonial Office, thus fortified by Government approval, Eyre was more determined than ever to have his own way. A member of the Executive Council, George Price, however, insisted that the Governor examine carefully the fraudulent estimates, threatening him with a letter to the Colonial Secretary giving him the full details of what was happening. It was Eyre's fear of any incrimination before the Colonial Office which finally forced him to examine the estimates. Even though the estimates gave clear evidence of fraudulent intent, the Governor attempted to compromise with Price, promising to prosecute the Constructional Engineer, but for an entirely different offence, in which he was not himself implicated. Price would have none of it and, in consequence, Eyre reluctantly submitted to Price's demands.

One hesitates to use such language as that which Lord Olivier permitted himself to use of Eyre, describing him as a "predestined and

irredeemable blockhead, conceiving himself to be an inspired and infallible hero", (1) yet one cannot help but come to the conclusion that the combination of fear and a mistaken infallibility led him to confuse the real issues, and to construe all political attacks personally, refusing to heed the facts as they were, always conceiving facts as he believed they ought to be.

The constant refusal to acknowledge real social and economic problems reveals a political naivete, based upon 'gunboat diplomacy' as the answer to all problems: it was a policy he had inherited from general British policy. Eyre's fear of inter-racial strife and his constant appeal for British troops resulted in what the psychologists describe as 'reverse action', a complete denial that any problems existed. On the question of Underhill's letter, (2) he wrote to Cardwell that the depression, if there was one, was caused by the laziness and untrustworthiness of the blacks, and their complete lack of moral fibre. (3) His refusal to meet Bogle and Maclaren, Native Baptist leaders, indicates his determination not to acknowledge the existence of a problem and his responsibility for failing to eliminate it. His failure to appreciate the plight of the Negroes, whether due to fear or not, resulted in a lack of the very things most needed at that time, sympathy and understanding, which alone could have taken the steam out of a situation approaching boiling point.

His accusation of Negro laziness was not substantiated by Sewell's independent survey in 1860. In fact, the history of the peasantry from the time of emancipation explodes the myth of laziness, for they were amongst the most industrious section of the community. This Eyre was not prepared to admit. If he had admitted it, it would have placed the responsibility for the unstable condition of society upon the plantocracy; thus he wrote to Cardwell on October 12th 1864:

The expenditure of the island for 1863 was augmented to the extent of £9,000. Most of which is due to an increase in crime and pauperism, additional expenses of lunatic Asylum, repairs to buildings, &c. (4)

Later that year, however, he conceded that the Assembly was not fully representative - but it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that this

1. Olivier Myth of Governor Eyre op.cit. 15

2. see below p. 273-277

3. Semmel, op.cit. 42-44

4. Jamaica Paper No.1, op.cit. p.1

was purely a utilitarian gesture, provoked by his own unpopularity with the Assembly:

The present return shows that the number of persons qualified to vote at election of members of Assembly were 1,903, whilst the actual numbers of voters who returned the 47 members of Assembly of the last election only amounted to 1,457, that is, 1,457 selected the representatives who constitute the House of Assembly, whilst 456,807 had no voice or influence at all in such election, and yet Jamaica is said to possess representative institutions. (1)

This was a fact recognized by Newcastle before he left office in April 1864, for he wrote to Eyre in the January of that year:

He Majesty's Government are most desirous to exercise no unnecessary interference with the action of the Colonial Legislature; but they are bound to bear in mind that the bulk of the population of Jamaica are not represented in its Assembly, the population being 441,264 in number, and the electors exercising the franchise only 1,798. (2)

His concern for representation was purely a matter of convenience, for he never really considered the Negro as worthy of representation; this is clearly evidenced by his reaction to the Underhill letter. He vigorously denied the charge of political injustice as well as the charge of poverty; the latter he had tacitly accepted in his letter to Cardwell in 1864. It is important to note that his questionnaire, sent out to the various sections of society, did not, as Underhill points out, reach the people with whom it was concerned: "the Governor took no steps to ascertain from the people themselves the nature of the complaint, or the causes of the distress under which they groaned". (3) The failure of the Governor to see the distress around King's House, in Spanish Town, enumerated in the Resolution sent from the Underhill meeting held there on May 16th 1865 (4) gives point to the planters' objection on another score: the attack published in the Morning Journal on July 8th accused him of "isolating himself in his mountain home, refusing to extend that hospitality to strangers, which his position requires of him, all for the better saving of his salary". (5)

In any attempt to assess the man Edward John Eyre, one must remem-

1. Jamaica Papers No.1, op.cit. p.1-2

2. ibid. pp. 1-2

3. ibid.

4. Underhill Phillippo op.cit. 326

5. ~~see above~~

5. Underhill Phillippo op.cit. 328. Jamaica Papers No.1, op.cit. 6

ber that he was very much a man of his times, perhaps influenced more than most by his masters at the Colonial Office; this was certainly the impression he made on not a few of the plantocracy, as evidenced by the editorial in the Morning Journal. This no doubt accounts for some of the hostility towards him, for the plantocracy, by nature antagonistic towards the House of Commons, saw him simply as a tool in the hands of the British Parliament; this was exacerbated by his refusal to socialise, the one function allowed by the House of Assembly to British Governors. Lord Olivier is perhaps too hard on Eyre when he implies that the Governor was the ultimate cause of the tragedy, if blame is to be portioned out then the British Government must accept a large portion for sending a man whom they knew was not strong enough for the task. Both Newcastle and Henry Taylor had stated that Eyre was not the man for the job, Taylor even suggested that Eyre would find difficulty when he had to deal with men of greater ability than himself, which may well account for another reason of the plantocracy's dislike of their Governor: not only was he seen as a puppet of the Colonial Office, but the friends he allowed himself were not those whom the plantocracy trusted, as was evidenced by the Tramway Scandal. When, however, under his authority the Negro rising was crushed, the plantocracy saw this as an act of strength and, as it was in their best interests, their attitude to the Governor changed completely.

The stubbornness of which he was accused may well be evidence of his insecurity both as a man and as an administrator; his personal feud with George William Gordon must be seen in the light of his insecurity, for he saw Gordon as a threat to his political security and perhaps a threat to his advancement, for he was disappointed that he had not been promoted higher in the ranks of the British nobility. (1) Unfortunately, at a time when in England there was strong and bitter denominational hatred, Eyre, himself a man of deep religious convictions, allowed these convictions to dominate, whereas the situation called for moderation.

It must have been a great surprise to Eyre to discover that he had become the centre of a furore in England, and that he had become a hero to some and a scoundrel to others. He is, perhaps, a man to be pitied

1. see Dutton op.cit.

rather than judged, for he was trapped in a situation for which he was not equipped, and the heated debate which ranged around Eyre might well be the reaction to an event which had cast doubt upon the idea of Empire, which seemed more important than the well-being of human beings, especially if they happened to be West Indian Negroes. That the British intelligentsia should debate the character of Eyre rather than the primary issue of cause and effect illustrates the tragedy that freedom was still understood in political terms rather than in terms of human experience. It is little wonder that Olivier should use one of Dicken's own characters (1) to describe the British attitude of superiority to other races at this period; Eyre was the incarnation of Podsnap.

Eyre's dislike of the Baptists is evidenced by the fact that he lost no time after the outbreak of the Morant Bay tragedy in making general and exaggerated accusations against them, European and Native Baptists alike. The chief culprits associated with the former were named by him in the Blue Book for January 24th 1866 as 'Messrs. Henderson, Reid, Dendy, Hewitt and Maxwell'; (2) their only crime appears to have been the sending of letters home describing the situation in Jamaica as they were experiencing it, and their attendance at 'Underhill Meetings', whilst the arch-criminal, operating from the safety of London, was Edward Bean Underhill, who had dared to inform the Colonial Secretary, E. Cardwell, of the contents of the missionaries' letters.

In his despatch to the Colonial Secretary, dated 20th October 1865, Eyre reveals his intense dislike for Baptists, especially those who had dared to interfere and oppose him:

63. I cannot myself doubt that it is in a great degree due to Dr. Underhill's letter and the meetings held in connection with that letter, where people were told they were tyrannised over and ill treated, were over-taxed, were denied political rights; had no just tribunals, were misrepresented to her Majesty's Government by the authorities and by the Planters, and where in fact language of the most exciting and seditious kind was constantly used, and the people told plainly to right themselves, to be up and doing, to put their shoulders to the

1. Our Mutual Friend (1866) see Olivier 139-140

2. Underhill Tragedy of Morant Bay Lond. 1895. 158



wheel, to do as the Haytiens (sic) had done, and other similar advice.

64. The parties who have more immediately taken part in these nefarious proceedings are firstly, G. W. Gordon, a Member of the Assembly and a Baptist Preacher; secondly, several black persons, chiefly of the Baptist persuasion, connected with him; thirdly, various political demagogues and agitators, who, having no character or property to lose, made a trade of exciting the ignorant people; fourthly, a few persons of better information and education, who find their interest in acquiring an influence amongst the black people by professing to advise them, whilst in reality they are but exciting and stimulating their evil passion; fifthly, a few Baptist missionaries, who like....endorse at public meetings or otherwise all the untruthful statements or innuendoes propagated in Dr. Underhill's letter; and lastly, a section of the Press, which like the Watchman and the County Union, is always disseminating seditious doctrines, endeavouring to bring into contempt the representatives of the Sovereign, and all constituted authority.
65. Whilst it is my duty to point out how mischievous has been the influence of a few Baptist ministers, and of various members of that persuasion, it is equally my duty, and a pleasure to me, to state that I believe the large majority of the Baptist ministers have been most anxious to support the authorities, to teach their people to be loyal and industrious, and to endorse the advice given to the peasantry by her most gracious Majesty. (1)

Eyre's condemnation of the European Baptists was challenged both in Jamaica and in England. The Government Commission enquiring into the events, namely, Sir Henry Storks, Russell Gurney, Recorder of the City of London, and J. B. Maule, Recorder of Leeds, arrived in Jamaica on 20th January 1866. The B.M.S. Committee had engaged George Phillippo, the barrister son of the missionary, to appear before the Commission to challenge the Governor's accusation; Eyre had, however, made no attempt to substantiate his accusation, and when Phillippo applied to appear before the Commission he was informed that they "could not accede to his request as no evidence had been given before the Commissioners affecting the character of Dr. Underhill or the Baptist missionaries in relation to the recent disturbances in St. Thomas-in-the-East". (2) In fact, Eyre admitted to the House of Assembly that he had no proof save "rumour". (3)

Meanwhile, in England The Times, not noted for its unbiased pos-

1. Jamaica Papers, No. 1. op.cit. 91
2. Underhill Phillippo op.cit. 344-345
3. Baptist Magazine 1866, 54

ition at this period, and certainly anti-Dissent, in its editorial for November 13th, drawing a parallel with the 1832 revolt used the event to attack Dissenters, revealing at the same time the unaccountable fear of the West Indian Negro prevalent in Britain:

In the old days of slavery the Jamaica Negro was noted among his race for his dangerous character, and he rose against his masters under the guidance of the Baptists, on the very eve of emancipation. (1)

This scandalous attack was answered by Sir Morton Peto, a wealthy contractor and Member of Parliament, who was also Treasurer of the B.M.S. It was a little more difficult to suppress his reply for The Times, through the Editor, had earlier refused to publish a reply written by Dr. Angus, which eventually was published in the Daily News on November 23rd. (2)

Peto argued that, as in 1832, The Times had made accusations which proved to be utterly false so, on this occasion also, there was no truth in the statements, for there was not even a Baptist Church belonging to the European Baptists in the area of Morant Bay. (3) This fact was substantiated by James Phillippo who was probably the oldest serving missionary in Jamaica - he had been there some forty three years yet it was not until 1866 that he visited Morant Bay. (4)

The defenders of Eyre point out that Edward Underhill had visited Jamaica in 1859, recording his impression in The West Indies where, it is argued, his emphasis is that "the general prospects of the island are improving"; (5) therefore the letter to Cardwell on January 1st 1865 appears contrary to his initial impression. His critics, however, fail to point out that Underhill also recorded that the inhabitants were not at all sanguine about the situation for "there were very few disposed to take a hopeful view of the prospects of the country". (6) The verdict of his critics, however, can only be described as misguided, for Underhill based his judgements not on his 1859 visit, though his visit no doubt coloured his thinking,

1. Baptist Magazine 1865, 780
2. Underhill Tragedy of Morant Bay, op.cit. 85-86
3. Baptist Magazine 1865, 781
4. Underhill Phillippo op.cit. 346 - a point admitted even by The Illustrated London News No. 234 Vol. XLVII Nov. 25th 1865 501-502
5. see Mathieson Sugar Colony op.cit. 170
6. Underhill West Indies op.cit. 183

but upon the letters of the missionaries, which arrived in increasing numbers in 1864, as he makes clear in the introduction to his later book The Tragedy of Morant Bay; his visit to the island ensured that he did not disregard these letters as sheer exaggeration, if not fabrication, for he had witnessed the kind of suffering about which they had written. (1)

The latent problems were exacerbated by a number of factors, which could not be contained by an ineffective Administration, hence Eyre's reaction to what appeared to him as a personal attack. Cardwell likewise dissented from Underhill's thesis which was that "the drought of the last two years" had worsened an already difficult situation, causing increasing poverty which, in turn, led to crimes of theft, added to which was impossible taxation, laxity of justice and a denial of political rights to the emancipated Negro. Eyre's denial of these factors reveals that he was either completely unaware of the real situation, or that he was afraid to be counted as an unjust person - which would hurt his religious pride. The state of the island was, in fact, only continuing in a pattern which had been the norm for many years, therefore Underhill's analysis of the Jamaican economy, wrote Semmel, "showed an understanding rare for the time, and it was many years before the Colonial Office was to see the situation in the same light". (2)

Underhill believed that "could the people find remunerative employment, these evils would in time be remedied, from their growing strength and intelligence". (3) Perhaps the phrase which distorted the judgement of Cardwell and produced the reactions of Eyre was that "it was more than time that the unwisdom (to use the gentlest term) that has governed Jamaica since emancipation be brought to an end", (4) with its implied criticism of the Colonial Office and the Queen's representative. Nevertheless, Cardwell's successor as Secretary for Colonial Affairs, the Earl of Carnarvon, who took office in 1866, was not so sensitive on the subject, for he stated before the House of

1. op.cit.

2. Semmel, op.cit. 42. As early as 1838 Lord Durham, in his Report on the situation in Canada wrote 'The Judiciary was insufficient, the juries were corrupt' - Carrington op.cit. 346

3. Jamaica Papers No. 1, 5.

4. ibid.

Lords on August 2nd 1866:

Promptitude, courage, fearlessness of responsibility, if not accompanied by a sound judgement on the part of the person who possess them become faults rather than virtues....the first attributes of a Governor is not only justice but perfect impartiality and the power of rising above panic and the apprehensions of the moment....It is to the fatal want of this quality in Mr. Eyre that we may trace at least half of the mischief which arose after the outbreak. (1)

That Underhill's letter brought matters to a head cannot be denied; its intention was simply to state the facts as reported, its immediate result after Eyre's reaction was the setting up of 'Underhill Meetings' all over the island to discuss the contents of the letter to Cardwell which served to reaffirm the facts stated by Underhill.

It was true that not every area suffered in the same way, or to the same extent, for example the "small settlers by their industry, frugality and thrift were better off; but even they felt the unjust pressure of taxation". (2) The Meetings resulted in petitions being sent to the Queen requesting some positive action, unfortunately the only reply was the so-called 'Queen's Advice' under the signature of Cardwell; it was, says Semmel, "a masterpiece of Victorian economic prejudice" and completely evaded the point at issue; (3) and included the following discordant statement, more likely to incite than to pacify:

I request that you inform the petitioners that their petition has been laid before the Queen, and that I have received Her Majesty's Command to inform them that the prosperity of the labouring classes, as well as of all other classes, depends, in Jamaica and in other countries, upon their working for wages not uncertainly or capriciously, but steadily and continuously, at the time when their labour is wanted, and for so long as it is wanted; and that if they would use this industry, and thereby render the plantations productive, they would enable the planters to pay them higher wages for the same hours of work than are received by the best field labourers in this country; and the cost of the necessaries of life is much less in Jamaica than it is here, they would be enabled, by adding prudence to industry, to lay by an ample provision for seasons of drought and dearth; and they may be assured that it is from their own industry and prudence, in availing themselves of the means of

1. cited Semmel, op.cit. 80
2. Underhill Phillippo op.cit. 328. Baptist Magazine 1865, 464-471
3. Semmel op.cit. 8-9

prospering that are before them, that they must look for improvement in their condition; and that Her Majesty will regard with interest and satisfaction their advancement through their own merits and efforts. (1)

This typifies the dogma current at that period that "the best way in which to encourage social happiness and to spread Christianity and advance morality was to let commerce take its own course", (2) but this theory was meaningless in the current Jamaican situation. There was certainly no general social happiness, and neither morality nor Christianity had advanced to any great degree due to the fact that a certain type of commerce had been given too much freedom. To the majority of the Jamaican populace the 'Advice' was an insult, irrelevant, downright dishonest and politically inept. How could the cost of living in Jamaica be cheaper than in England, when the vast majority of the labouring force could not get work? How could they work for higher wages, when the greater part of the plantocracy could not pay wages at all? A comparison with the British scene served only to show how bad the British situation was.

To Eyre this was official approval of his policies, and to ensure that the country knew this, he published copies of the letter for distribution throughout the island, sending copies to all ministers and clergy with instructions for it to be read from the pulpit. Many of the Baptists refused either to read or even display the 'Advice' believing that it would only aggravate an already explosive situation, so obvious to those with eyes to see.

Underhill was safe in England, within reach only of the verbal abuse aimed at him by the plantocracy, and some talk of his being arrested; (3) this kind of safety was not afforded his Jamaican counterpart, George William Gordon who, in 1862, joined the Native Baptist Movement.

Gordon was not so polished or as tactful in his attack upon the social and economic inequalities prevailing in the island as was Underhill, and this finally led to his untimely death by hanging.

George William Gordon, born in 1820, (4) was the illegitimate

1. Jamaica papers No. 1, op.cit. 9. Augier and Gordon Sources 230

2. Burn, W. L. Age of Equipoise op.cit. 70

3. Underhill Tragedy of Morant Bay op.cit. 46

4. Roberts, op.cit. provides a useful summary of Gordon's life and activities.

son of Joseph Gordon, a wealthy Scottish planter, and a Negro slave. When Joseph Gordon eventually married a white woman, George and his mother were barred from the house. On recognition of his son's intelligence, Joseph Gordon provided not only the boy's freedom, but also books, that he might teach himself to read, write and also "do figures". Self taught, he mastered his lessons well enough to become as astute, if not more so, than his father, whom he surpassed in wealth and influence, and in 1840 he married Lucy Shannon, the daughter of an Irish editor, while her mother ran a private school in Kingston. (1)

Politically, at this period the Assembly was made up of two main parties, the Town party consisting mainly of the wealthy coloured people, and the Country party made up of members of the plantocracy. For some considerable time the Town party had been of immense value to successive Governors in their struggle with the plantocracy; Eyre, however, motivated no doubt by his fear of the Jamaican Negro and Coloured population, sought his support from the Country party, but was forced to attempt some sort of compromise when a minority section of small traders became represented in the Assembly by Gordon. (2) Gordon first entered the House of Assembly in 1850 as a member of the Town party, but through his advocacy on behalf of the poorer members of society he soon found himself very much to the left of the party, and for a short while lost his seat in the Assembly, until re-elected in 1863. During these years he became a Justice of the Peace and was elected to the Kingston Common Council, and on several occasions deputised for Edward Jordon during his long term of office as Mayor of Kingston.

Gordon's entrance into politics was encouraged and stimulated by the Native Baptist cause. On his re-election to the House of Assembly as the representative for St. Thomas, after expressing thanks to James Phillippo for his support he explained that he had "given much attention to the Native Baptists, and attributed to them his election". He continued "see what the Baptists have done here, the poor Native Baptists, by peaceable means; they have raised at last a representative for the Baptist people and churches of all classes in this island". (3)

1. Roberts, op.cit. 27

2. Semmel, op.cit. 38-39. Hall Free Jamaica op.cit. 7-8

3. Underhill Phillippo op.cit. 320

Mathieson's statement that it is "impossible to understand how a man of his (Gordon) social and political standing.... could debase himself to the level of a native Baptist" (1) underestimates the importance of the Native Baptists as a Movement in the political life of the country, and as an important stimulus to Gordon's own sense of social righteousness. The Native Baptists quite naturally were a movement of the poor who most readily lent it their support. (2) It is argued that Gordon was religiously unstable, beginning in the church of his father, the Church of Scotland, moving, it seems as he rose in the social scale, on to Anglicanism, and finally into a more congenial atmosphere, congenial, that is, to his own temperament, of the Native Baptist community. It is not surprising that a man of such strong emotional expressions as Gordon should feel more at home in the freer atmosphere of the extreme left of Dissent, a community which provided both stimulus and occasion for his own involvement in championing the cause of social justice. Geoffrey Dutton's derogatory remarks concerning Gordon's "windbag religion" and his description of Gordon's entry into the Baptist Movement as "the last of sixty in a mass conversion on Christmas Day 1861" (3) suggests that he does not fully understand the doctrine of Baptism and its relation to conversion, or the freer atmosphere of Dissenting worship, especially amongst the more extreme Baptist communities. Phillipppo, who baptised Gordon, (4) was not in the habit of baptising people without adequate preparation, and it was he who suggested to Gordon that he commence "an independent cause under his own superintendency"; he did so, he recalls, "because G. W. Gordon Esq. has occupied himself in preaching and doing good openly and in various ways....He has met with much persecution, is denominated a hypocrite, and by some of whom better things might be expected, 'a troubler in Israel'". (5)

Attempts have been made to portray Gordon as a rogue, the main evidence being that proceedings were brought against him in 1862 "in the interests of the Company and of Society" (6) regarding a

1. Mathieson Sugar Colony op.cit. 223-224
2. for a modern parallel cp. the spread of Pentecostalism in Latin America in E. H. Robertson Tomorrow is a Holiday Lond. 1959
3. Dutton, op.cit. 222
4. Underhill Phillipppo op.cit. 319
6. Mathieson Sugar Colony op.cit. 156-159
5. ibid 320-321

debt amounting to £700. That he was reckless in business as was his father is not to be doubted, that he was deliberately fraudulent is hard to believe; Mathieson, in his attempt to give a fair picture of the main protagonists in the Morant Bay Tragedy, does not report Gordon's dealings in the Jamaica Mutual Life Assurance Society, of which he was a founder member. The mortality claims were so great during 1850-1851, due to the cholera outbreak, that some of the directors proposed evading their responsibilities by winding up the Society. Gordon refused, and forced the payment of all claims by threatening his fellow directors with an injunction in Chancery. (1) It is noticeable that Mathieson makes little, if any, comment on Eyre's illegal deportation of Gordon from Kingston to the area of Martial Law, which suggests that Mathieson's judgement upon the Native Baptists as a Movement, and Gordon in particular, was not free from bias.

Whilst Gordon became the leader of a Baptist community, he refused to accept the title of Reverend, though he did ordain as one of his ministers Paul Bogle, who was to take an important part in the Morant Bay revolt. Dutton is right when he suggests that the enmity between Gordon and Eyre was partly due to the "bitter inter-denominational hatred of the nineteenth century Christianity". (2) Gordon represented the radical strain of Dissent whilst Eyre the conservatism of the Establishment, political and religious.

The vigour with which Gordon attacked Eyre, and the constant advocacy of the poor, cannot be attributed to an attempt to "avenge himself on his white father and taking under his protection the poor of his black mother" (3) for this does not fit the facts. It is true that it was not until he was himself poor that Joseph Gordon took much interest in his son, who then provided, not only for his father, but also for the family he had not been allowed to be part of. His conduct towards his father can only be described as magnanimous: the most that can be said concerning any rivalry between father and son is well put by Adolphe Roberts - "he observed his

1. Roberts, op.cit. 29
2. Dutton, op.cit. 230-237
3. ibid. 252



father's activities without malice, though with a frank ambition to outdo him". (1) His protests on behalf of the poor Negro were based upon his observations and motivated by what he believed to be Christian principles.

The antagonism between Gordon and Eyre was inevitable, their different backgrounds, as well as colour, did much to prepare the ground, and neither did very much to conceal their mutual dislike. From the time of Eyre's arrival in Jamaica in 1862 these two personalities clashed. He arrived as Temporary Governor, and amongst his first letters was one from Gordon detailing the shocking state of the Montego Bay prisons, which he had visited in his capacity as a Magistrate, his discovery of a man dying in appalling conditions incensed his concern for the poor. It was alleged that the dying man had first appealed to the Rector of Montego Bay, S. H. Cooke, who promptly sent him to the prison. Gordon enlarged upon the social decline of the district and suggested that justice was far from being seen to be done. Eyre ordered an inquiry, and though the jail was found to be in a disgraceful state, Eyre regarded Gordon's accusations as nothing more than an insult to the rector. (2) The Governor had been influenced greatly by Baron von Ketelhodt, a German who had married an Englishwoman with property in Jamaica, and who soon persuaded Eyre that Gordon ought to be relieved of his office as Magistrate. Gordon appealed to the Colonial Office, who informed the Governor privately that Gordon had acted within his rights, but publicly upheld Eyre's action. (3) This could only serve to antagonise the deposed magistrate, who suffered further indignities at the hands of von Ketelhodt a few months later. Gordon was elected to the position of Churchwarden in the vestry meeting of St. Thomas, but at von Ketelhodt's instigation he was forcibly removed on the grounds that he was now a Baptist. (4)

Angered not only by the treatment meted out to him, but more so by the conditions prevailing in many parts of the country, he wrote to the Governor's Secretary on June 9th 1862 on the question of immigration carried out at the expense of the public, when so much

1. Roberts, op.cit. 25

2. *ibid.* 33

3. Semmel, op.cit. 39

4. Roberts, op.cit. 34.

suffering could be alleviated and employment found for Jamaicans, arguing that "no sign of civilization or benign influence can be traced to the Corporation of Kingston. It seems stricken, and is powerless for good, and a system of hard heartedness disgraces its existence." (1) Five days later, he wrote an even stronger letter to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, the Duke of Newcastle.

That Gordon should attack the local authorities was bad enough; to write direct to the Colonial Office was going too far, but attacking the Established Church as well was, in the eyes of Eyre, tantamount to a capital offence. Gordon's attack now seems justified, for the Establishment was costing the Jamaican taxpayer, including the Negro peasantry, some £45,000 a year, of which £1,400 was sent to the absentee Bishop of Jamaica, who was residing in Europe. After these events, any consideration of a cordial relationship between the two men was impossible.

A new House of Assembly was elected in 1863, and Gordon by the aid of the Native Baptists regained a seat in the House. He used the floor of the House to publicise his pro-Negro policies, his attacks upon authority were bitter and directed in unmistakeable terms at the enemy, who in this case was the Governor and his policies, or lack of them. It was from his speeches in the House of Assembly that a feeble case was made out against him, on the grounds that he incited rebellion, but in reality the case against him was his continual attack upon the ability of the Governor to govern, coupled with an awareness of the situation and its possibilities which the Governor and the authorities seemed incapable of recognising. The Royal Commission, in their report, stated as their judgement that the charges brought against Gordon were unsubstantiated. (2)

The following extract from a debate in the House of Assembly illustrates how bitter were Gordon's feelings towards the Governor, and how seriously he believed the situation to be, notwithstanding the Governor's complacency. The language may be vitriolic, but no one can deny the concern behind the attack:

1. cited Williams British Historians op.cit. 109-110
2. Underhill Phillippo op.cit. 343

Mr. Gordon:....When all our laws are put at defiance, the populace will break out from discontent, and the Lieutenant Governor will be unable to allay their feelings. Mr. Eyre says he is the representative of Her Majesty the Queen, but it is clear that he lacks administrative capacity; and unless he is speedily removed, the country will be thrown into a state of confusion, by reason of his illegal conduct. When a Governor becomes a dictator, when he becomes despotic, it is time for the people to dethrone him, and to say 'we will not allow you any longer to rule us'. I consider the proceedings of Mr. Eyre especially dangerous to the peace of the Country, and a stop should at once be put to his most dogmatic, partial and illegal doings.....if we are to be Governed by such a Governor much longer, the people will have to fly to arms and become self-governing (cries of Order!) The Honorable member for Kingston (Dr. Bowerbank) gave expression to an innuendo against me; he called me a reckless member. I think the honourable doctor said we should not seize on the Lieutenant Governor, or belch out our wrath against him. I know that when a stomach is out of order, rhubarb and other alternatives do a great deal of good. I think therefore that the learned doctor would be acting exceedingly well if he could discharge from the mind of the Lieutenant Governor some of the deposits that are there, and which are bringing him into collision with this House and the people....(1)

Such language could only bring Gordon increased opposition; fear for his life was expressed in a letter written to Louis Chamerovzow, Secretary of the British Anti-Slavery Society, on May 10th 1865:

I have to contend with hatred and persecution of no ordinary kind at present. You will by a paper sent to you herewith, see that the Governor, the Judge (of a Circuit Court), the Attorney-General and a Special jury, are all conspiring against me here: and I believe that if some of them found the opportunity, they would unscrupulously dispatch me. (2)

It would be wrong to give the impression that Gordon was entirely blameless, His personal hatred of Eyre coloured much of the work he did towards the welfare of his own people, it distorted his obvious gifts of leadership and his ability to arouse social passion in a manner that could not be other than dangerous; in consequence, his extremism blinded him in his use of words, and even people. In a pamphlet printed after the publication of the Queen's Advice, and distributed in both St. Ann and St. Thomas, it was headed as follows:

People of St. Ann's  
 Poor People of St. Ann's  
 Starving People of St. Ann's  
 Naked People of St. Ann's (3)

1. cited Williams British Historians op.cit. 113-115

2. cited Semmel, op.cit. 41

3. Cited Roberts, op.cit. 36

and continued:

We know that our beloved Queen is too noble hearted to say anything unkind even to her most humble subjects....People of St. Ann's....you have no sugar estates to work on nor can you find other employment. We call on you to come forth. Even if you be naked come forth and protest against the unjust representations made against you by Mr. Governor Eyre....People of St. Thomas-in-the-East, you have been ground down too long already....Remember that he only is free whom the truth makes free. You are no longer slaves but free men....(1)

According to the Jamaica Colonial Standard Gordon had commenced his agitation for the downfall of the Assembly some three years earlier, but most actively within the three months prior to the riots. The report also stated that he had founded secret societies and promoted the formation of trained bands, placing them under a terrible oath well calculated to awe the soul of the Negro and, although most took it, all shrank with horror from revealing its terms, even in presence of the gallows. Needless to say, the Commission set up by the British Government to enquire into the reasons for the riot, did not substantiate these charges. (2) George William Gordon was not always perceptive in his choice of helpers, it may well be argued that in his own struggle for power he imbued Paul Bogle with the same desire, but failed to provide Bogle with the necessary learning and skills of diplomacy to fulfil that craze for power. Bogle was a devoted disciple of Gordon's who had with a number of others established the village of Stoney Gut, near to Morant Bay. He was an energetic leader with "the masterful character of an African chief". (3) Whilst of limited education, he was successful and comparatively well off amongst his class of small traders, acquiring much local influence and authority so that he was able to raise sufficient money for the building of the Baptist chapel at Stoney Gut. (4) Taking the lead from Gordon, Bogle developed a strong sense of nationalism, and it was not difficult for him to raise a group of supporters from amongst the local community, for the Negro had every reason to feel aggrieved with the heavy taxation and the lack of impartiality on the part of

1. cited Semmel op.cit. 44-45

2. cited The Illustrated London News No. 2345 Vol. XLVII Dec. 2nd 1865

3. Sherlock, op.cit. 200

4. Olivier The Myth of Governor Eyre op.cit. 191

the Governor. At a meeting held in St. Thomas in October 1865, a protest was made against police action, resulting in a petition to the Governor:

We the petitioners of St. Thomas-in-the-East, send to inform your excellency of the mean advantages that have been taken of us from time to time, and more especially this present time, when on Saturday 7th of March an outrageous assault was committed upon us by the policemen of this parish, by order of the Justice, which occasioned an outbreak for which warrants have been issued against innocent persons which we were compelled to resist. We therefore, call upon your Excellency for protection, seeing we are Her Majesty's loyal subjects, which protection if refused we will be compelled to put our shoulder to the wheel, as we have been imposed upon for a period of 27 years with due observance to the laws of our Queen and Country, and we can no longer endure the same, therefore is our object of calling upon your Excellency as Governor-in-Chief and Captain of our island. (1)

There was little hope of the Governor even considering the petition, for in the previous August Bogle and James Maclaren had walked the fifty-five miles from Stoney Gut to Spanish Town, to present the complaints of the parish to the Governor, only to be told as they stood at the Governor's door that he would not see them. (2)

The phrase in the October petition "the shoulders to the wheel" could well refer to some positive action, since report were coming in that illegal drilling was taking place in some villages, and that collections of small arms and ammunition were finding their way to the villages. Unrest was spoken of throughout the island, and still the Governor maintained that there was no cause for alarm; yet conveniently, in his report to the Colonial Office after the Revolt, the Governor uses this phrase as one of the slogans for his claim that revolt was pre-planned. (3)

The events which eventually translated discontent into violent action, began in the Court room at Morant Bay. It was the 7th October, a Saturday and Market day. One of the cases before the Petty Sessions was that of a Negro boy charged with assault; he was found guilty and fined 12s. 6d., including costs. A Negro named Geoghehan told the boy to pay the fine but not the costs. Geoghehan was promptly ordered

1. Augier and Gordon Sources op.cit. 230-231
2. Semmel, op.cit. 45. Roberts, op.cit. 39
3. see above p. 273-274

to be taken, but he escaped through the aid of an angry mob, amongst whom was Bogle. The court met again on the Monday, 9th October, this time to try the case of a certain Lewis Dick, for trespass on Middleton Plantation. The Plantation which was adjoining Stoney Gut was an abandoned area, and for years Negroes had made their home there, claiming right of possession. The case of Lewis Dick was important for all whose homes were threatened by a certain W. M. Anderson's claiming legal right to the area. It was not surprising that many from Stoney Gut, and Bogle in particular, attended the Court that day. As soon as Lewis Dick's case came before the Court about one hundred and fifty people entered with sticks. As the magistrate pronounced Dick guilty, Bogle came forward and advised him not to pay the fine but to appeal against the decision, which was his legal right. The Court, however, bungled the whole affair and that same day issued a warrant for Bogle's arrest in connection with the Geoghegan affair on the previous Saturday. On Tuesday, 10th, eight Court officers, all Negroes, went to Stoney Gut to serve the warrant, only to be seized by three hundred to five hundred men armed with a motley array of weapons, cutlasses, spikes and sticks, who all came out of the Baptist Church of which Bogle was the minister.

When eventually the officers of the Court returned to Morant Bay they did so bearing a threat from Bogle that he and his men would arrive in the town the next day. Fear struck the heart of the Custos, von Ketelhodt, who promptly ordered a guard of Volunteers to protect the Court House and hastily sent a letter to Eyre:

I deeply regret that it is my duty to bring to the notice of His Excellency the Governor, that a serious outbreak among certain of the labouring population in this neighbourhood is threatened, and in fact has already commenced....I cannot hesitate under these circumstances, to submit that, it is very probably that without some military aid, the forces at the disposal of the authorities will, in the event of the people carrying out their threats, be insufficient to uphold the law, and in that case, the worse consequences must be anticipated. (1)

Eyre acted quickly, calling a meeting of the Executive Council and arranging for H.M.S. Wolverine to go to Morant Bay and convey one

hundred troops to quell the uprising: it was the 'gunboat policy' in action. With a false sense of security, Eyre returned to his mountain home at Flamstead to attend a dinner party. Olivier appears to accuse the Governor of not only cowardice, but indifference, when he says that on the 11th October, the day he ordered the Wolverine to go to Morant Bay Mr. Brovo, with whom Eyre was staying at Spanish Town,

Begged the Governor to go down ~~himself~~ to St. Thomas, assuring him that his presence would relieve the situation; but he would not go because he was expecting guests to dinner on the evening of that day at Flamstead. (1)

Here we see one of the major differences between Eyre and Gordon: whatever else may be said of Gordon, he knew and understood the people he represented; in spite of the accusation of sharp practise in business he reveals a deeper understanding and sympathy with their needs than ever Eyre revealed. Eyre on the other hand, revealed only contempt and indifference.

The Colonial Standard for 21st October gave an account of what happened on Wednesday 12th:

On Wednesday the Vestry met and proceeded with their business. About four o'clock p.m. drums were heard, and after this the rebels made their appearance. The Volunteers were drawn up in line before the Court House, eighteen in number. The Custos, who stood on the steps, exhorted the people, some six hundred armed with deadly weapons, not to enter the Square, and stated that if they had any grievance to complain of, to say so, and it should receive redress. They, however, persisted in coming into the Square, upon which the Custos read the Riot Act. By this time the mob had come within a few yards of the Volunteers, firing a volley of stones at the Volunteers. Captain Hitching then gave the order to fire. The most murderous attacks were then made on every one coming within reach of the rebels... Finding that these parties had taken shelter, they smashed the windows to atoms, firing continually into the Court House, when the Volunteers returned their fire, doing good service. About half-past five o'clock the Court was fired. The Custos then put out a flag of truce by the advice of the Clerk of the Peace. The rioters asked what it meant, and were answered peace. They said they did not want peace, but wanted war. A second flag of truce was put out, with no better effect, the rebels crying 'war, war' ....The unfortunate victims were then killed in detail, under circumstances of great atrocity. (2)

1. Olivier. The Myth of Governor Eyre op.cit. 241
2. Jamaica Papers No. 1, op.cit. 13.





Reform' (1) and it is well to set the brutality against the statement of Dr. Kitson Clark when he attempts to describe the kind of background the people of the middle of the nineteenth century inherited, and remember that the Colonies took even longer to change:

What the law lacked in force, however, it tried to supply in horror by prescribing the death penalty for a long list of offences, some of them trivial, some of them hardly offences at all. The resultant spectacles at Tyburn were much enjoyed by the crowd. For it the habits of many Englishmen were violent, the tastes of still more of them were coarse and their pleasures callous. (2)

Granted that exaggerated reports of what had taken place in Morant Bay and memories of the Mutiny in India eight years earlier infuriated the authorities, nevertheless, the attitude revealed by the troops, from the common private to the highest officer, was one of sadistic delight - again we need to remember that life in the British services, the Army or the Navy, was perhaps the hardest in the world: it was not until 1873 that flogging was abolished in the British Army, a callous life produced a callous attitude. Such an attitude was certainly displayed in the events that followed the Morant Bay rebellion, as the following letter from a private, even allowing for embellishments and notwithstanding its erratic grammar, reveals:

I must tell you that when the rebels broke out there was but 300 of our regiment in the place, and the rebels was to look at them about seventy to one of us. But by their surprise we shotened all before us: we left neither man or woman or child, but we shot down to the ground. I must tell you that I never see site like it before as we taking them prisoners by a hundred per day - we save them next morning for to have some sport with them. We tied them up to a tree and gave them 100 laishes, and afterwards put a shot into their heads, and we take the king of the rebels and hang to the yard arm of one of the British man-o-war ships. We captured altogether from them about £700 from them so far, that we are getten something from them every day our regiment what is rambling through bushes after the rebels...I never see such a site before in my travels - I seen from fifty tow sixty shot and hang every morning...(3)

The common private was certainly encouraged in his brutality by his senior officers, as a report from Captain Ford, in command of the St. Thomas-in-the-East Irregular Troop, published in the Morning

1. Briggs, op.cit. 436.
2. Kitson Clark, op.cit. 59-60
3. cited Olivier The Myth of Governor Eyre 278-279

Journal reveals:

On our march from Morant Bay we shot two and catted five or six, and released them, as the latter were only charged with being concerned in plundering and not murders. This morning we made raid with thirty men, all mounted, and got back to head-quarters at four p.m. bringing in a few prisoners, and having flogged nine men, and burned three Negro houses, and then had a Court Martial; from a simple examination: nine were convicted by Court Martial: one of them to a hundred lashes, which he got at once, the other eight to be hanged or shot. We ~~quater~~ on the enemy as much as possible; small stock, turkey etc., we take ad libitum: other supplies we can find receipts for. We press all the horses and saddles we can find, but the black troops are more successful than ours in catching horses - nearly all of them are mounted. They shot about 160 people on their march from Port Antonio to Manchioneal, hanged seven in Manchioneal, and shot three on their way here. This is a picture of Martial law. The soldiers enjoy it. If they run on their approach they are shot for running away. (1)

The Deputy Adjutant General, Colonel Elkington, writing to the Commander in the field, Colonel Hobbs, gave the official view:

I send you an order to pass on at once to Stoney Gut, but I trust that you are there already. Hole is doing splendid service all about Manchioneal, and shooting every black man who cannot account for himself (sixty on line of march). Nelson at Port Antonio hanging like fun by Court Martial. I hope you will not send any black prisoners. Do punish the blackguards well. (2)

Naturally, such reports were well used by the Jamaica Committee, but the incident which disturbed the conscience of the British public more than all the other atrocities was the dramatic climax to the personal feud between Gordon and Eyre.

Eyre immediately saw the incident as the chance he had long awaited, to rid himself of his enemy. Placing the blame squarely upon Gordon, he informed the Colonial Office that his sole intention was to see that "the chief of all the evils should not go unpunished", (3) he even lied about the manner of Gordon's arrest, stating that

for some little time he (Gordon) managed to evade capture, but finding that sooner or later it was inevitable, he proceeded to the house of General O'Conner and there gave himself up. I at once had him placed on board the Wolverine for safe custody and conveyance to Morant Bay. (4)

1. Jamaica Papers No. 1, op.cit. 21

2. cited Semmel, op.cit. 51

3. ibid, 52

4. Olivier The Myth of Governor Eyre op.cit. 301

The truth is that the warrant was issued for Gordon's arrest on the morning of the 17th when Gordon was at the house of his cousin, being treated by his doctor. It was the doctor who informed Gordon of the warrant and accompanied him to O'Connor's house. Gordon no doubt voluntarily gave himself up in the mistaken hope that his trial would take place in Kingston, where Martial Law was not operative. Meanwhile, Dr. Bowerbank, Custos of Kingston, and personal friend of Eyre, ransacked Gordon's offices and shop; on finding an old street map of Kingston on which certain streets were marked, concluded that this was a revolutionary document and took it to General O'Conner.

None of the pro-Eyre writers have yet been able to answer satisfactorily the question of the illegal action taken by the Governor in transferring Gordon from Kingston to Morant Bay in order to get rid of him quickly by Martial law, apart from accepting that Eyre was afraid that his case was so weak he feared Gordon would be released by a civil court.

To add to the indignity of the farce called a trial, Eyre, who had accompanied Gordon on the Wolverine, dashed back to Kingston once his enemy was safely in Morant Bay, and left the army to deal with him. At the trial Gordon, the Assembly member, was given a young inexperienced Naval Lieutenant, Lieutenant Brand, as his presiding judge, ensuring that legal points were dispensed with. The trial took place on October 21st, but the verdict seemed pre-determined; given very little chance to defend himself, Gordon was found guilty. After a delay of two days, while the Governor confirmed the verdict Gordon, along with eight other men, was hanged from the boom of the prison ship. (1) The next day Bogle was captured and suffered the same fate.

Eyre's treatment of Gordon set off the debate in Britain which lasted over three years, and though the Government first congratulated him, it consequently recalled him and set up an enquiry which condemned the brutality and said of Gordon that there was no evidence to show "proof either of his complicity in the outbreak at Morant Bay,

1. see Jamaica Paper No.1 for reports of the trial. 40-60

or his having been a party to a general conspiracy against the Government"; (1) but still there was a reluctance to allow any blame to be attached to the Queen's representative. Meanwhile, in Jamaica, though Martial Law was not in force in Kingston the island was in the grip of fear; the following letter written by Mary Knibb must surely have been written with 1832 in mind:

Martial law in Jamaica is a reign of terror. I am not sure that this will ever reach you as the feeling against poor Baptists is bitter as ever it is. We do all the mischief is always the cry. But we have no people or ministers in the disturbed districts, it is true that there are people who call themselves Baptists there, but we have never had anything more to do with them than we have with other heathen people who are superstitious and will not come to the light, but the truth is that parts of the country have been cruelly neglected in every respect, very lately we have sent one of the young men from Calabar as a missionary to labour within 26-30 miles of the scene of the tumult last week, he was arrested and after having been kept in prison 5 days and his house searched and all his papers examined, he was released being told although he was a Baptist there was nothing against him (very remarkable was it not), but my mind is on the rack almost about another minister a native who had been 10 years pastor of a church in Kingston, formed under the care of Mr. Tinson, Mr. Palmer by name. He has been a prisoner nearly or quite 3 weeks. (2)

The importance of Morant Bay for Jamaica was that it marked the end of Jamaican self-government. As in the case of St. Vincent, where Eyre strove to change the island's government from that of self government to that of Crown Colony government, (3) Eyre saw in the events at Morant Bay grounds for once again advocating Crown Colony government. The Assembly, which had dramatically changed its opinion of the Governor, now proclaiming him as a hero, was easily persuaded to vote itself out of existence, together with Jamaica's two-hundred years old constitution, replacing it with a new system which was to last for about eighty years; from 1865 to 1884 there was pure Crown Colony government, from 1884 until 1944 there was a semi-representative government until finally, in 1962, Jamaica became an Independent Nation with a remarkable motto: 'Out of many, One People'. (4)

1. Williams British Historians op.cit. 117-121
2. Letter in Regents Park College Oxford: for trial and arrest of Palmer see Baptist Magazine 1866, 189-193
3. this was effected after he left.
4. Black, op.cit. 204-215

## Conclusions

The study of British Baptist involvement in Jamaica has been motivated by an important theological principle, namely that the idea of involvement is central to all Christian witness and development. The story that has been told is, in fact, an historical declaration of this principle, halting though the declaration may have been.

Implicit in this study is the suggestion that the Baptist contribution was the more decisive because of the attempt by certain of the missionaries to accept the logic of this principle, and become part of the nation, one with the people to whom they had come. This was made easier for them because of their doctrine of the Church, the more so during the difficult years after 1843, when they were an indigenous community; hitherto they exercised greater freedom than their Dissenting colleagues, the Methodists and Moravians, in spite of B.M.S. attempts to restrict their activities.

Alongside the theological principle, the historical situation was such that the radical potential of the Baptist community was allowed room for growth, and certainly gave some direction as to the way it ought to develop; primarily along a creative course, with the free villages, schools and labour agreements, etc. This was made possible, not so much by the political events in Britain, important though they were, but by the activities of the people in Jamaica.

The names of the main characters in the story are known to but a few, and rarely appear in the general histories of the period: Knibb sometimes gets an honourable - or otherwise - mention, Phillipppo, if mentioned, is so usually because of his book Jamaica: Its Past and Present State. Underhill and Gordon owe their place to their part in the Morant Bay tragedy, while Burchell, Dendy, Henderson and others are left to passing reference in Baptist histories; yet these were the men, along with countless others from all denominations, who gave some semblance of meaning to emancipation.

Canon Max Warren<sup>t</sup> makes the point in his Social History and Christian Mission, when discussing 'The Social and Economic Background of the Nineteenth Century Missionary' that, in spite of the patronising

and sometimes condemnatory attitude adopted towards Christian missions and missionaries, many of the Colonial policies would have been even more <sup>irksome</sup> than they were, had it not been for the missionaries. Canon Warren puts the whole work of Colonial development into perspective when he asks:

Who then were these men whose social initiative and spiritual conviction sent them out on such a very improbable adventure? A Wilberforce, and later a Buxton, might speak up for them in Parliament: a director of the East India Company like Charles Grant might be their advocate in the City of London: remote, benevolent and slightly amused, a Palmerston might allow himself to be lobbied in their interest: but it was the missionaries who did the adventuring; It was they who, until quinine was seen to be relevant to malaria, died with disconcerting rapidity....(1)

Caught in the grip of theological compulsion and the prevailing historical situation, the Baptists allowed themselves to be caught up in the political turmoil; this was the only way that they could work out the logic of their beliefs, and also meet the deepest needs of their people - the inherent longing to be free. It has been suggested throughout this study that the Baptists were more prone to rebellious tendencies than were the other Dissenting churches; this, too, must be understood in its theological framework. Liberty was a direct result of the work of Christ; the work of Christ inaugurated a new concept of humanity and anything which distorted that new humanity had to be attacked and destroyed: this was an essential emphasis of the Anabaptists. The Christian was now a new person, but slavery treated him as less than a person, therefore, as we have seen above, Baptist preachers in England, such as Robert Hall, as well as William Knibb, attacked slavery on the grounds that it de-humanised and de-personalised people. Not all accepted this theological principle, yet it is not surprising that those who saw it most clearly, and acted upon it, came mainly from within the ranks of the Baptists.

Between the 1830s and 1840s Knibb evolved a working definition of freedom which he outlined in his speeches to the apprentices, the key note being "to be free, you must be independent".(2) He also

1. Warrent, op.cit. 38
2. Hinton, op.cit. 284

argued that this freedom and independency brings with it a tremendous responsibility, the responsibility of being one with the people. This principle brought the Baptists under suspicion, and they became the scapegoat for political blunders; especially is this seen in the Morant Bay tragedy; even though Knibb had been dead twenty years, the editorial of the Times lays the blame ultimately on him. (1)

It is tempting to limit the constructive period of the Baptists to the years 1834-1845, but the reaction of the Baptists to the social conditions of the 1850s and 1860s was an important contribution to the eventual political development which came in 1866 after the Morant Bay disaster, and, therefore, ought to be considered as an integral part of the ongoing work. If G. W. Gordon derived much of his radicalism from his own personal struggle for power, it was certainly helped along a more definite and a more compassionate direction through the influence of the Baptists. From Phillippo and the Native Baptist cause which he had embraced, Gordon received encouragement and stimulus, which enabled him to work out his radicalism for the benefit of the Negroes, and one might conjecture that it enabled him to face the inevitable end with dignity.

Gordon's case against Eyre and the plantocratic regime of that period was strong, and supported by those who sought justice and still looked for freedom; the struggle for freedom moved a step further but, as in 1832, it was to involve bloodshed.

It is not the intention of this study to suggest that Baptists alone have made any lasting contribution to the development of Jamaica, rather is it an attempt to even the balance of previous surveys and assessments of the island's history. Hitherto the Baptist contribution has either been ignored or mentioned just in passing - this includes their contribution to the struggle to end the Slave Trade, as well as the work for the final emancipation of slaves. Such admirable books on Christian mission as Bishop Stephen Neill's Colonialism and Christian Missions and A History of Christian Missions make reference to the West Indies, but no reference to any Baptist

1. Ketterns, D. The Rev. William Knibb, Missionary to Jamaica Lond. 1865 Baptist Magazine 1865, 777-785

contribution in that area. Historians such as R. Coupland in his The British Anti-Slavery Movement make no reference at all to Knibb's work, either in Jamaica or England; while Dr. Eric Williams in Capitalism and Slavery mentions them only in passing, and then not always in a positive way, though later in British Historians and the West Indies he does acknowledge the work of Knibb, Phillippo and Burchell.

It is, however, significant that in such books as The Making of the West Indies by Augier, Hall, Gordon and Reckord, The Sociology of Slavery by Orlando Patterson and The Story of Jamaica by Clinton Black, the work of the missionaries is given a more honourable place alongside the politician and industrialist, in the development of the country.

It has been the purpose of this study to indicate that in any assessment of Jamaican history Baptists cannot be overlooked if a balanced view is to be reached, and this means accepting that the basis of the Baptist contribution is to be found in the theological principle of involvement.

This involvement was the result of Baptist preoccupation with freedom; in the theological sense they came to understand this to mean, primarily, freedom from sin, but that was meaningless unless it also meant freedom to serve Christ and His Kingdom: this in turn included for many involvement in social and political problems; Robert Hall, for instance, was involved in the struggle for security and better conditions for the stocking workers of Leicester. (1)

The very use of the work 'Obligations' in the title of Carey's Enquiry suggests - particularly in this case - that freedom of necessity must include involvement, in its most practical sense; thus we find Carey's method of evangelism structured to serve the needs of the people as, for example, his short-lived Savings Bank, the Agricultural Society of India, not to mention his educational work. (2) Therefore, the establishment of a community centred around church and factory, though dictated by necessity, strengthened Carey's conviction that involvement at this level was an imperative.

1. Macleod op.cit. 214-217

2. Potts, op.cit. 62-72.

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To the Baptists of Jamaica, involvement in such things as wage agreements, education and particularly the free village system was a vital part of their attempted definition of freedom. Within the framework of the free village system, not only was 'responsible independency' worked out but, in some measure, it made up for the negative form of freedom adopted by the British Government, namely the granting of freedom to the Negroes without ensuring that the society in which they were to live both enjoyed and encouraged freedom - the right of all people to develop to the full basic human privileges. As the Apprenticeship system revealed, the plantocracy were not prepared to accept any positive concept of freedom, but rather slavery in another guise - wage slaves.

At least the development of free villages enabled the missionaries to give an opportunity for a positive concept of freedom to be worked out - an opportunity for people to develop as human beings. Knibb and Burchell may have argued against Government aid for education and extolled the virtues of Free Trade, but when it came to obtaining money for their many projects they did not hesitate to accept monies from as many sources as possible, especially the Society of Friends. (1) Phillippo, on the other hand, had no qualms about accepting money from the Government - as long as there were no strings attached - even attacking the Free Trade policies of Britain, believing them to be the cause of the Jamaican depression (2) Thus, for Phillippo, involvement meant jettisoning some cherished Dissenting 'freedoms'.

Attempts at answering the question of the relationship of the Gospel to Society were made by men such as F. D. Maurice, who argued persuasively that the true law of the universe reveals that man is made to live in community and that men can only realise this, their true nature, when they co-operate with one another as children of God and brothers in Christ (3) or, as a twentieth century philosopher aptly put it, "all real living is meeting", implying that involvement

1. Baptist Magazine 1866, 763: after Knibb's death, Sturge financed a school run by Mary Knibb for 'the elder girls of the peasantry'.
2. See above p. 222, 237, 263
3. Vidler, op.cit. 96

was of the essence of existence, man was essentially a 'society being'. (1) Later, in the second half of the nineteenth century, the English philosopher, T. H. Green, with his 'Ethical Idealism' and his interest in social questions, influenced such groups as the Anglo-Catholic succession of the Oxford Movement who, in turn helped to arouse the Church to see its wider responsibilities. (2) By 1864 the Church was lamenting the fact that "the relations between Christianity and the ideas and facts of modern civilisation" had "not yet been worked out". (3) Green suggested that "just as God conceived the universe, so human beings have the power of conceiving a future state of themselves that is better than the present, and of realising this conception by their own volition". (4)

The Baptist missionaries involved in the free village system preceded Maurice's 'Christian Socialism' and Green's 'Ethical Idealism' by at least thirty years, in fact, as we have witnessed, Carey was driven to the same conclusion in 1796. (5) Not only was the free village system an experiment in community living, it helped to shape something of the independent character of modern Jamaica for, in Hugh Paget's words, the "present social structure of Jamaica does in fact date from this period" and "the people had taken the first and most important step towards becoming a real community". (6)

The missionaries provided an experimental framework in which to work out some practical definition of freedom with involvement, where involvement was vital for the development of the art of living, and ensured that freedom maintained a positive content; where equality meant equal concern and responsibility for social maturity, and not the limited opportunities for progress as described by Plato in his 'city states' with their social classifications. (7)

One would not argue that the free village system produced a 'model community', or that it is a panacea for modern ills, for their influence both for good and evil is evidenced in the period

1. Buber, M. I and Thou, Lond. 1955, 11
2. Inglis, K. S. Churches and the working classes in Victorian England Lond. 1964, 6-9 for growing Tractarian concern for the working class.
3. Elliot-Binns, L. E. English Thought 1860-1900 The Theological Aspect Lond. 1956, 262
4. Lillie, W. An Introduction to Ethics Lond. 1955, 222-223
5. See above p. 203
6. Caribbean Quarterly Vol. 1 No. 4 1950, 7-19
7. Plato Republic see also above p. 202-203

of depression leading to the Morant Bay tragedy; nevertheless, they provided a necessary environment for the training of citizens, an environment not provided by either the British Government or the Jamaican Assembly. It is not without significance that the basic principle of community living adopted by the missionaries has been tried as a political expediency down the century since, with varying degrees of success, notably the great Indian leader, Gandhi, who, in not dissimilar circumstances (namely India having gained freedom from British rule) sought positive freedom, not in Western style capitalism with its urbanisation and industrialisation, or in the enforced community concept of Marxist Communism, but in an adaptation of the village system tried by the early Baptist missionaries: whether Western style urbanisation, Marxist communism or the Village community will prove the way forward for India, remains to be seen.

It is the exploration of positive freedom which makes the Baptist contribution to Jamaica significant, and it is the writer's deep conviction that a re-discovery of this principle of involvement will provide some clue to much needed answers in our present day situation, with its racial tensions, for it is in the story of such a history as that of the Baptists in Jamaica during the years 1783-1865 that we see the beginnings of many of our present problems.

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